BY·NILE·AND EUPHRATES

H·VALENTINE·GEERE

Glasgow
University Library

James A. McCallum Collection
WITHDRAWN
S6 1 — e.10

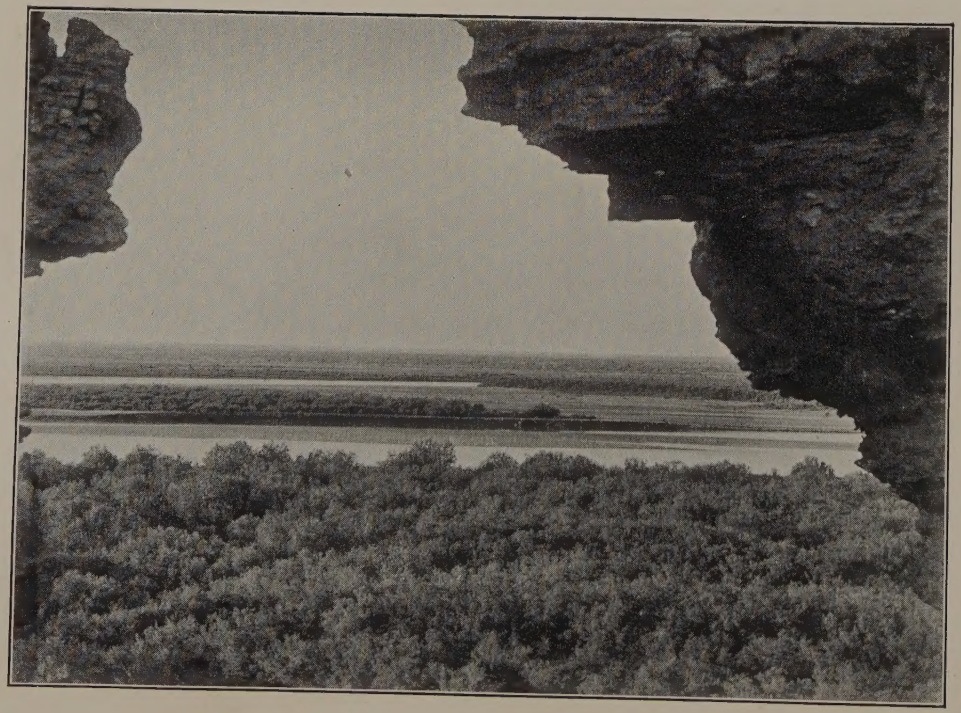
Archaeology
VA 5.G3
904-A

Book No 0405222
30114 004052224

F. L. McKeen

BY NILE AND EUPHRATES

WITHDRAWN



THE EUPHRATES VALLEY AT SALAHIEH: FROM THE BLUFFS.

BY NILE AND EUPHRATES

A RECORD OF DISCOVERY AND ADVENTURE

BY

H. VALENTINE GEERE

OF THE STAFF OF THE BABYLONIAN EXPEDITION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

EDINBURGH: T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET

1904

Printed by
MORRISON & GIBB LIMITED,
FOR
T. & T. CLARK, EDINBURGH.
LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT, AND CO. LIMITED.
NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

X·1765-1949
GLASGOW UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

TO

CLARENCE S. FISHER

AS A TOKEN OF FRIENDSHIP, AND OF GRATITUDE

FOR THE CARE WITH WHICH THROUGH NINE

WEEKS OF TYPHOID FEVER HE NURSED

THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

IN the following pages I have tried to give some idea of life in an excavator's camp and to sketch certain out-of-the-way places and their inhabitants. If they succeed in interesting the reader in the life and scenery of the Euphrates, and in showing that it has charms quite equal to the better known ones of the Nile, they will serve their purpose. I hope, however, that they will arouse some interest in the cause of Babylonian research. The example of America, and the success which has attended the excavations at Nippur, should surely encourage England to despatch an expedition to investigate one or other of the sites which are so numerous on the banks of Euphrates and Tigris. In my last chapter I have set out some of the reasons which may be urged in favour of her turning her attention once more to the field in which she has already won so many laurels, and I need say no more upon the subject now. For the rest, I trust the descriptions of the present-day

aspect of the *tels*, the Bedouin, the *fellahin*, and the scenery of desert and river may serve to convey some impression of their fascination to the reader who has never made acquaintance with the realities themselves, and to recall pleasant memories to those who have.

To Dr. Hastings and Dr. Selbie I tender my most sincere thanks for their kindness in correcting the orthography of Arabic words and names throughout the book, and for many helpful suggestions.

The illustrations facing pages 25, 32, 176, and 320 are from photographs by the Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania; and for permission to use them I am indebted to the kindness of the Committee and Dr. Hilprecht. The portrait of Ali Suefi is from a negative by Professor Petrie. The illustrations facing pages 9, 17, 105, 113, and 240 are from photographs by my friend, the late Mr. George Cowley, whose untimely death left a sad gap in the little British colony at Baghdad.

The plan of a house in Baghdad and that of the khan at Haswa are chiefly due to Mr. C. S. Fisher, who helped me in the preparation of the former, and inspired me with sufficient energy to help him in the measurements for the latter at a time when I felt inclined to "take things easy" after a long

ride. The sketch of Persian pilgrims facing page 256 was made by Mr. Palmer from some indifferent photographs; and for the remainder of the illustrations I and my camera must accept all responsibility.

H. V. G.

SOUTHAMPTON, 1904.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THE EUPHRATES VALLEY AT SALAHIEH: FROM THE BLUFFS	*Frontispiece*	
A TYPICAL BIT OF THE TIGRIS	*Facing page*	9
A SCENE ON THE RIVER'S BANK, BAGHDAD	„ „	17
TWO ZAPTIEHS	„ „	25
ARAB CRAFT ON THE EUPHRATES	„ „	32
MARKET SCENE AT SANDAFEH	„ „	49
EXCAVATING AT THE BEHNESEH "RUBBISH HEAPS"	„ „	57
SKETCH MAP OF PART OF THE NILE VALLEY, SHOWING SITES EXCAVATED, ETC.	„ „	65
ALI: PROF. PETRIE'S RIGHT-HAND MAN	„ „	73
A FARMSTEAD ON THE BAHR YUSUF	„ „	81
A DHOW AT BUSREH	„ „	88
PRINCIPAL FLOOR OF A HOUSE IN BAGHDAD	„ „	97
THE BRIDGE OF BOATS AT BAGHDAD	„ „	105
A PROCESSION (AT A CIRCUMCISION), BAGHDAD	„ „	113
PLAN OF KHAN HASWA, ON THE BAGHDAD-HILLAH ROAD	„ „	129
THE MOUNDS OF NIPPUR	„ „	145
A DOOR SOCKET (INSCRIBED) AT THE INNER GATE OF THE TEMPLE OF BEL	„ „	161
THE PLAIN AT NIFFER, WITH EXCAVATED PART OF THE CITY WALL	„ „	176
HUT BUILDING AT NIFFER: OUR HOUSE IN BACKGROUND	„ „	184

A HILLAH WORKMAN AT NIFFER: NASIR EL-HUSSEIN . . . . . *Facing page* 192
ABD EL-KADER EFFENDI: OUR "COMMISSIONER" „ „ 208
SCENE IN HAJJI TARFA'S MUTHIF DURING OUR VISIT THERE . . . . . „ „ 217
SKETCH MAP OF EUPHRATES VALLEY, ETC., SHOWING NIFFER AND THE PRINCIPAL TOWNS AND RUINS ON THE OVERLAND ROUTE FROM BAGHDAD . . . „ „ 224
A CHURD ON THE EUPHRATES . . . „ „ 240
PERSIAN TRAVELLERS IN A KHAN AT NEJEF . „ „ 256
A STREET IN THE "EUROPEAN QUARTER," BAGHDAD . . . . . „ „ 281
SMOKE SWATHED HIT . . . . . „ „ 289
A BACKWATER AT ANAH . . . . . „ „ 296
THE CITY GATE AT SALAHIEH . . . . „ „ 304
PART OF THE CITY WALL AT SALAHIEH . . „ „ 312
COURTYARD OF A EUPHRATES KHAN . . „ „ 320
THE VILLAGE OF DEIR HAFR, SYRIA . . „ „ 328
AN ANTIQUITY DEALER OF BAGHDAD: ALI KURDI „ „ 336
BUNDIR ABBAS, PERSIAN GULF . . . „ „ 345

BY NILE AND EUPHRATES

A RECORD OF DISCOVERY AND ADVENTURE

I

IN the autumn of 1895, through the kindness of Professor Flinders Petrie, I was offered an appointment on the staff of an expedition that was about to set out for Mesopotamia, to continue the work of excavating the ruins of the ancient city of Nippur.[1] These excavations are conducted on behalf of the University of Pennsylvania. Commenced in 1889, they have been carried on, with occasional intervals, since that date with most satisfactory results. The expedition was to leave England in about a fortnight from the date of my receipt of the proposition, to relieve the director then in the field, Mr. John Haynes, who, having been on the site for nearly three years, naturally needed a change and rest. The time given me to

[1] The site is now known as Niffer, or Niffar. It is the Calneh of Genesis.

make up my mind was certainly short, but the opportunity was not to be missed, so I promptly accepted the offer and the conditions attaching to it. Besides minor stipulations, I agreed to act as assistant to Mr. John Duncan, who was to take charge of the work during the absence of Mr. Haynes on furlough, and to stay on the site for a period of three or five years at the option of the directing committee in Philadelphia.

Although a comparatively young man, Mr. Duncan possessed considerable experience of travel in Syria and Egypt, and he spoke a little Arabic. Moreover, he had the advantage of having assisted that most successful of diggers, Professor Petrie, in some of his excavations. For my part, I had then no practical knowledge of either the East or of excavating, but my enthusiasm was unbounded, and the reported dangers of the work only stimulated my desire to be in the thick of it.

On the 8th of November we left England, expecting not to see its shores again for at least three years. Yet within seven months we were back in our homes, owing to circumstances which will be explained in the right place. Our return was a great disappointment to both of us, but it was typical of the uncertainties that beset the path of the excavator and traveller in the East. Now, in the light of riper experience, nothing that could happen in Turkey would surprise me very much ; but at the time I certainly was surprised, and not a little disheartened at such a check to my aspirations.

From the moment of our arrival in Turkey everything seemed to go wrong; misfortunes dogged our footsteps, and delays faced us at every turn. We travelled first to Paris, and thence by the Orient Express to Constantinople. Our plan was to make our halt at the latter city as brief as possible, and then to strike overland for Baghdad (which is the nearest spot to Nippur where anything approximating to civilisation exists), either by way of Alexandretta and Aleppo, or Beyrout and Damascus, according as circumstances favoured the one route or the other. To do this it was first necessary to obtain a *teskereh*, or permit to travel, and we speedily discovered that this would be an extremely difficult matter. At the best of times it is not easy to get leave to travel in the interior of Asiatic Turkey, and we arrived at a singularly unpropitious moment. The Armenian troubles were afoot; feeling in Europe ran high against the Turk; and the Turk was inclined to retaliate by making himself unpleasant to Europeans whenever it was in his power to do so. The English and American journals were especially declamatory about the wrongs of the Armenians, and consequently Englishmen and Americans were in particularly bad odour in Turkey. As we were Englishmen in the employ of Americans, we came in for a double share of suspicion, although, as a matter of fact, our sympathies were entirely with the Turk against the Armenian agitators. At such a time it was hardly cause for wonder that we speedily made acquaintance with difficulties even greater than those

which usually face travellers in the Ottoman Empire. We haunted the consulates tirelessly, and energetically assailed all sorts of officials for leave to be off; but our efforts were unavailing; we were always told to wait a little while longer, or politely informed that it would be out of the question for us to move for some time. Twice we tramped over to the police bureau in the Stamboul quarter, where passports are issued, to make personal application in its evil-odoured and crowded offices; and on each occasion, after being passed on for no apparent reason from one official to another, we were informed that no special permit such as we sought could be issued just then.

The intervals of this vain *teskereh* hunting we filled up by seeing the sights of the city. Unfortunately the weather was cold and rainy during the greater part of our stay, and excursions afoot were generally out of the question. Since then I have seen the place under very different circumstances, when bright sunshine and spring breezes united to render it agreeable, and absence of worry left me free to enjoy its beauties; but those first impressions of it, when the streets were converted into veritable rivers of mud, were far from pleasant; and in my ignorance of cities farther east, I hastily concluded that nowhere could streets be found more filthy or more full of horrible smells. I soon had an opportunity of making comparisons.

Our patience gave out at the end of three weeks. In despair of ever getting the permit to go overland, we determined to take the sea route, and

accordingly left Constantinople for Alexandria on board a steamer of the Khedivial line. Still our bad fortune clung to us. Our hopes of finding a direct steamer for Busreh from Alexandria or Port Said were disappointed, and we even experienced much difficulty in getting berths for Bombay, as the passenger accommodation in all steamers was very crowded just then. It was only by going on to Suez, and waiting in that dreary little port for three days, that we at length secured places. However, we did get away finally, and after an uneventful voyage landed in Bombay on the 30th of December. Three days later saw us heading north on board the British India Company's steamer, *Pemba*, in company with a number of Indian officials and a crowd of pilgrims bound for Nejef and Kerbellah. The officials all left us at Karachi, but more pilgrims came on board, and every port in the Persian Gulf at which we touched added its quota to the number.

When we left Karachi behind us we felt that at last we were within measurable distance of our goal. Amongst the pilgrims on board were a few Turks and many Arabs, so we were able to form some idea of the people amongst whom we expected to live for the next three years. They were a queer, unsophisticated crowd, but peaceable and orderly withal, and very punctilious in regard to praying regularly. The only drawback to their presence aboard lay in the fact that all day long one or other of them was cooking villainous-smelling curry. The boat fairly reeked with the pungent odour as we

dodged from port to port of the Gulf in our leisurely progress, and the same nuisance was with us on board the river steamer to Baghdad.

On the 15th of January, a fortnight after leaving Bombay, we crossed the bar at the mouth of the Shatt el-Arab without mishap, and glided into Turkish waters. After dropping the mails at Fao, we steamed slowly up the broad river, between banks thickly covered with gardens of date palms, until we reached Mohammerah. There we fired a salute in honour of the sheikh, who is a person of some importance, and supposed to be well disposed to the British ; and then our anchor dropped, and we felt that we were on the threshold of our new home. The thought was an inspiriting one, and served to dissipate the slight feelings of homesickness which, I fancy, we had both experienced.

For my own part, I always look back upon that evening at Mohammerah as the time when the charm of the East first fell upon me. Such a wonderful twilight as stole over the river then it had never been my good fortune to see before ; and though I have seen many splendid atmospheric effects since, that evening stands out more vividly than any of them in my memory. In the Indian Ocean we had been favoured with some magnificent sunsets, but they were all too bright, almost too gaudy, and had lacked that element of human interest which the houses on the river's bank lent to the scene at Mohammerah. There, as the sun set, the whole landscape became tinged with most exquisite hues, ranging from almost black purples

in the shadows of the orchards, through deep steely blues upon the water, to palest amethyst in the sky. The whole scene looked like some wonderful piece of mother-of-pearl inlaid work on a vast scale and of most delicate beauty. As the moon rose above the swaying palms, scattered lights began to appear in the houses ashore and aboard the dhows lying on the river, and the sounds of an Eastern night came floating across the water. The faint echo of one of those droning songs so dear to the Arab taste mingled with the lowing of the herds settling down to their night's rest, and the noisy barking of the dogs was interspersed with the melancholy howls of innumerable jackals. Then, and immediately afterwards, when it was bathed in the soft moonlight, the land seemed to my eager imagination an ideal one to hold those secrets of the past which were locked in its mysterious *tels*; and my heart beat high at the thought of the work that lay before me.

The next morning found us anchored off Busreh, where we had to do a day's quarantine. Two days later we left the *Pemba*, and embarked on the river steamer *Khalifah* for the last stage of our journey to Baghdad.

Almost all the pilgrims from the *Pemba* were on board the *Khalifah*, together with many fresh arrivals from Persia and Busreh, making up a grand total of over six hundred. The boat was a side-wheel one, much after the style of the Nile steamers, and was one of two owned by an English company. There is also a Turkish company, which

runs five steamers on the river, but they are such miserable little tubs and their eccentricities are so great that even the most patriotic of the Sultan's subjects prefer to travel by the British line whenever possible. That there are not more British-owned boats plying on the Tigris is due entirely to opposition by the Turkish Government, for the company could easily employ half-a-dozen boats, and would gladly place them on the river if they could obtain leave to do so. As it is, cargo for Baghdad is frequently kept at Busreh for months awaiting its turn for shipment, and freights are absurdly high. Mr. Haynes told me that he paid a higher rate from Busreh to Baghdad than from London (and in some cases from New York) to Busreh. The fault does not lie entirely with the shipping people; doubtless they might be more active in pressing their request for permission to put on extra steamers; but they should also receive more support from our consuls, I fancy. At any rate, I have frequently heard Baghdad merchants refer to the existing state of affairs as disgraceful; and from the instances quoted by some of them it appears that there is legitimate ground for fault-finding.

To get rid of some of the merchandise that had accumulated at the Busreh go-down, the *Khalifah* took in tow a large and heavily laden barge, which being secured alongside naturally retarded our progress seriously; and as the river was in flood and the waters were sweeping down madly, our pace was terribly slow. It was a tedious journey,

A TYPICAL BIT OF THE TIGRIS.

in fact, and, beyond Kurna, depressing in the extreme.

After leaving Busreh we ran between palm-covered banks until nightfall, passing Kurna in the dark, so that we were unable to see the meeting of the rivers; but the next morning we awoke to find ourselves in a flat swampy country, with no sign of tree or vegetation to break the monotony of the scene. Now and again we passed miserable Arab villages of straw-built huts, from which the boys and girls came running to follow the boat and beg for food. At first the pilgrims responded liberally to their appeals, throwing them bread, onions, scraps of meat, and other delicacies. This was an easy matter, as the boat kept very close in to the bank all the time. The youngsters exhibited wonderful powers of endurance in keeping up with us for a long while, cutting across the many bends that the river makes, and wading or swimming over numerous small irrigation canals that lead off from it. Every time that food was thrown to them they scrambled and fought for it like a pack of hungry wolves; but when we threw them money, although they stopped and picked it up, they always shook their heads and pointed to their mouths, to show that it was something to eat they really wanted. This little trait served to impress upon us that we were positively outside the reach of civilisation here, since even silver money was held in lighter esteem than a scrap of stale bread, a half-eaten onion, or a well-picked bone that a self-respecting dog in England would scorn to look at. Most of

the young savages looked as hard as nails, and although they were remarkably lean, as all Arabs are, they were well set up, and a few of them had good features. Each encampment let loose its crowd of youngsters, so that although many fell out of the running, as they became tired or found themselves too far from their homes, our boat had its following of beggars as long as the novelty of the thing appealed to the pilgrims. As the pious ones grew tired of the amusement, however, the number of followers gradually fell off and at last disappeared entirely.

Although the river is a mile and a half wide near its mouth, it narrows very rapidly above Kurna. The *Khalifah* had frequently to draw right in to the bank, and once or twice had even to stop, in order to allow strings of native sailing-boats to pass. At one bend in particular, known to the British captains as The Devil's Elbow, there was only just room to allow her to turn. Small wonder that we bumped now and again. The marvel was that we could make headway at all, hampered as we were with the clumsy barge alongside.

Shortly after noon of the first day out from Busreh we reached the miserable town of Kaleh Saleh, a place of about twelve hundred Arab inhabitants. The unhappy Turkish officials who are quartered there must surely have hard work to wring taxes out of such a district. With its poor mud hovels the place appeared to me too squalid to be a reality. I was startled to find that we had actually to land a mail there, and to learn that the

town was in telegraphic communication with the great world, as represented by Busreh on the south and Baghdad on the north. While here, I heard that one of our deck passengers had fallen overboard in the night and been drowned. It was while drawing water from the side of the boat that she fell into the river; if she had used the pump that was provided on board she would have run no risk; but the pilgrims held the belief that it was fitted with a sucker of pigskin and was therefore unclean; and thus, a victim to her religious prejudices, the poor creature lost her life.

After leaving Kaleh Saleh behind us we ran into even less lovely scenery, and found the floods spread out before us in such a manner that it was difficult to make out where the banks of the river stood. The Arab villages were all flooded, and the people and their cattle were wandering about in a forlorn way pitiful to see. Late at night we reached Amarah, where we came to a halt again, this time to ship and unload some cargo. The town is larger than Kaleh Saleh, and boasts a covered bazaar of sorts, a *serai*, and barracks. Its dirt and disorder at that time were simply appalling, and my first intention of going ashore was speedily abandoned when I saw the depth of mud through which I should have to wade. Yet there was a certain wild picturesqueness in the scene as revealed by the light of flaring lamps and torches. The greater part of the townsfolk had been drawn from their homes by the excitement of the boat's arrival, and were buzzing and chattering round the gang-

ways and on the banks. At some few stalls in the bazaar merchants were sitting, chatting, smoking, and sipping their inevitable coffee; and a lamp moving in the distance showed where some belated pedestrian was endeavouring to avoid the worst of the mud.

Next morning we saw the mountains of Kurdistan lying faintly blue away to the east, but all around us the waste of waters was drearier and more depressing than ever. Desolation was never more vividly pictured than in those flooded Mesopotamian flats. The sight of a real Bedouin encampment, on a rising bit of ground, with its striped camel-hair tents surrounded by browsing flocks, was welcomed by all as a relief to the monotony. Driven from their lairs by the rapid rise of the floods, wild pigs and jackals were to be seen splashing dolorously through the waters or swimming from knoll to knoll in search of rest and food. Carcases of sheep and cattle, victims of the flood, floated down-stream in great numbers. Vultures and hawks wheeled overhead, and we saw many storks and a few pelicans. The farther we went the worse the flood became. Frequently we passed parties of Arabs camped out on top of their straw huts; and the poor creatures sometimes cursed us as we went by, out of sheer envy of our better fortune, I suppose. To make the misery of the time complete, we had cold driving rain for the greater part of the trip—rain that found out all the weak spots in the awnings and put the climax to the discomfort of the luckless pilgrims camped on

the decks. They, however, bore it with typical Oriental patience, continued cooking their malodorous curry, and saying their prayers the appointed number of times each day, rain or no rain; and whenever there came a gleam of watery sunshine, they hung up their clothes and bedding to dry as much as possible. Their good humour under such trying conditions, I remember, gave me a favourable opinion of their class, which I still retain.

Naturally enough we became impatient to reach Baghdad. But, although the engines were doing their best, our progress was of the slowest. It took us an hour to double one point, where we were actually carried down-stream four times by the raging current, and very frequently we seemed to remain stationary. At Koot el-Amarah, which is, roughly speaking, half-way between Busreh and Baghdad, we stopped to coal. As the gangways and banks were extremely slippery after the rain they were sprinkled with coal dust, to afford a footing to the coolies; and the state of the decks after the operation may be more easily imagined than described. The town is a slightly improved edition of Amarah, not quite so dirty or squalid. After Koot the aspect of affairs gradually improved, the land showed up more above the water, and the current was less strong; and exactly a week after weighing anchor at Busreh we tied up alongside the custom-house at Baghdad.

As soon as we landed we learned that the latest news from Niffer was most discouraging. The

Arabs were reported to be in a highly dangerous mood, and the safety of the expedition was said to be threatened. Moreover, the country between Baghdad and Hillah was submerged, and we were told that it would be quite impossible for us to get out of the city. In fact, the floods that season were the worst on record; the river rose eight feet in one night; the embankments were broken down; and the plain around the city was converted into a sea. Much anxiety was felt lest the waters should break through the dams that had been hastily constructed, in which case the entire town might well have been swept away. A few days before our arrival the garrison had been turned out to strengthen the embankments, and the *wali* had ordered all able-bodied citizens to assist at the work.

We could see for ourselves how truly serious things were, but since it would have been ridiculous to be turned from our purpose after coming so far, despite all obstacles, we determined to press on to Niffer. It was a week, however, before we were able to pass our stores through the custom-house; and afterwards, we had to spend two days in selecting and packing the articles we wished to take with us, in checking the invoices of the score or more of cases that had been opened in the custom-house, and in engaging a dragoman and hiring our caravan. We had received instructions from Mr. Haynes not to take with us more than we actually required for the journey down, since he had made up his mind already that it would be

impossible for us to remain on the site. We therefore took only a change of clothing, a small supply of provisions, our bedding, and a few necessary instruments.

We engaged a stout fellow named Shammo to accompany us as far as Hillah, where there was a native agent of the expedition, who had been instructed to look after us. Shammo was a Christian, who had come from Tel Kaif in his boyhood and settled in Baghdad. He had served for some years on the British gunboat, and had thus been brought into contact with the members of the European colony. His tirelessness, obliging ways, and general handiness soon rendered him a prime favourite with the English, and he gradually became recognised as "handy man" to the colony. He kept a small general shop, which was usually looked after by his two sons; he catered for the sports and the cricket club, and was steward and billiard-marker at the old club; and he it was who usually served as dragoman to English travellers. I was fated to see a great deal more of him later on, and the more I saw of him the better I liked him. He certainly charged high prices, and he readily acknowledged that he made a commission on nearly everything he bought and sold for us; but it was all above-board; and he undoubtedly earned his money well, being always cheerful, indefatigable in his efforts for our comfort, remarkably honest, and possessing plenty of pluck.

In all our arrangements we were greatly helped by Mr. T. Blockey, of the firm of Blockey, Hotz,

& Co., who have acted as honorary agents at Baghdad for the expedition since its initiation. Mr. Cree (now managing partner) and Mr. Broomhead, of the same house, also showed us many kindnesses; and all the British residents were extremely hospitable to us during our stay in the place. Indeed, I have invariably found the little British colony at Baghdad most kind and brimming over with hospitable inclinations, and I look back to my sojournings in their midst with the liveliest gratitude to all of them.

Of the city itself I shall attempt no description at present, as I saw so little of it on that occasion, and my wish is to give the impressions of my first journey in the little known parts of Mesopotamia as they struck me at the time.

A SCENE ON THE RIVER'S BANK, BAGHDAD. A GOUPHA IN THE FOREGROUND, BY THE STERN OF A SEFINAH.

II

ON 4th February everything was ready for our start, and we made our way out to the western limits of the city, where our caravan animals awaited us on the *sud*, or embankment. All our friends in Baghdad had told us that we should never succeed in getting away at the time; and we had seen for ourselves how completely isolated by the floods the place was. But we had ascertained that a few travellers had got through from Hillah the day before, and we were resolved on making the attempt. Shammo declined to commit himself to any opinion about our chances of success, but he informed us that the muleteers whom we had engaged thought we should be able to get through if we could find any means of transporting our animals over the first part of the flooded area, which was the worst.

Certainly, when we reached the *sud* and saw the flood stretching away before us as far as the eye could reach, and the enormous crowd of pilgrims and travellers collected on its edge, our hearts sank within us. It seemed hopeless to think of going forward. The only visible means of crossing the waters were three *gouphas* (coracles built of reeds and covered with pitch), for the possession

of which hundreds of eager pilgrims were clamorously disputing. An end was put to the argument by a soldier who claimed the *gouphas*, declaring that they were wanted for the transport of Government forage, although the fact of the matter was that he had been bribed by some merchants to act on their behalf. The crowd murmured, but they gave way; and the soldier commenced loading the *gouphas* with sacks. While we were debating what to do, Shammo came up to us and urged us to offer a high price for the hire of these same craft and to take forcible possession of them. Quite unused to such proceedings, we hesitated at first to accept his advice; but he assured us that if we acted promptly and energetically we should gain the day. We thereupon advanced to the fray, and while he bargained with the boatmen, we hauled out the sacks that had been placed in the boats already, and instructed our muleteers to embark the animals and our baggage immediately. The *gouphagis* knew that they would get little or no pay from the soldier who had requisitioned their craft, whereas from us they would get three times their proper charge; so they were willing enough to listen to our persuasions if we would protect them against the dreaded *askar*; and our muleteers, proud to show what great people they were employed by, lost no time in obeying our instructions. Meanwhile the soldier had gone off to bring up the rest of the sacks; but just as we were about to embark he returned, and, realising what was going on, made a rush for the

scene, shouting threats of terrible vengeance upon us, our muleteers, and the *gouphagis*. The latter showed signs of weakening, so we shoved off one of the *gouphas* and it instantly paddled out of reach. Then the enraged soldier offered to draw his dagger, but we put a bold face on matters, and he did not care to go too far. He was, however, very violent in his manner, and finally came to blows with Shammo. But we gained our point, and the end of the matter was that we paddled off in triumph, leaving him raging up and down the bank, to the huge delight of the crowd, who, in their enjoyment of his discomfiture, forgot their own annoyance at being left behind. The last we saw of the scene was a furious struggle going on for possession of the sole remaining craft.

On account of their circular form and their extreme lightness, the *gouphas* were difficult things to manage in the troubled waters. They swung round dizzily in every eddy, and when they took the ground, as they frequently did, they nearly bumped everybody overboard. As they are never provided with seats of any sort, they are comfortless things to travel in at the best of times, unless you take a stool or chair with you; and crowded in as we were amongst the lurching animals, we were often hard put to it to avoid getting kicked or trampled upon. The larger of our craft was carrying five baggage animals, the two muleteers' donkeys, and the muleteers and *gouphagis*; while in our own smaller one were Mr. Duncan, myself, Shammo, a *zaptieh*, two saddle-mules, and a lot of

our baggage, besides the crew and the muleteers' boy. It will be readily understood that our progress was very slow. At some parts we simply drifted with any favourable current; at others our crew plunged overboard, with their clothes tucked round their necks, and towed us, while we stood ready to pole off from any rising ground; and sometimes they used their primitive paddles.

The monotony of the journey was unbroken until about three hours before sunset, when we reached a part where the land began to show up above the floods. Another hour's journey up a canal through which the waters, swollen by the floods, carried us at a great pace, brought us to Guba Mahmoud, our point of disembarkation. Here there was an encampment of Persian pilgrims, returned from Kerbellah and waiting for means of crossing the flood to Baghdad, who struck me as the most ruffianly crowd I had ever set eyes upon.

Through Shammo's inquiries we learned that from this point we could ride on to Hillah, by picking our way carefully. So, although the sun was within an hour of setting, we gave orders to saddle up and be off immediately. Thereupon the *zaptieh* who was escorting us came to us with long tales of the dangers of the road in the dark on account of the floods and of robbers. He concluded by begging us to stop where we were for the night; and his advice was backed by the two police in charge of the camp and all the pilgrims. Some of the latter offered to share the accommodation of their poor tents with us, but we declined

their hospitality and stood firm by our decision. Then our noble escort declared that he did not know the way ; and Shammo admitted that he was equally at sea, as he had not travelled on that road for eight years. In point of fact, the floods had so altered the face of the country that nobody did know how to find their way. Our muleteers had been thoroughly scared by the tales told them, and they added their tearful remonstrances to those of the crowd. But we were not to be shaken from our purpose, and by dint of threatening to report the whole affair to the *wali* of Baghdad we finally carried our point.

In view of later experience I am inclined to think that we underrated the risks we were running, and that the advice offered us was not altogether so self-interested as we fancied at the time. The four hours' ride that followed was as unpleasant an experience as heart could wish. Owing to the delays caused by the argument and the baiting of the animals, we did not get on the move until the sun was setting ; and as soon as he went down the air became bitterly cold.

Our way lay over sodden ground that was heavy going for the animals, and save for fitful glimpses of the moon it was so dark that we could do nothing but trust the safety of our necks to the sagacity of our mules. It was my first experience of riding a mule, and as I was not up to the tricks of my steed I had a lively time of it. He tried to dislodge me by scraping against the loads of the pack-animals, and as the bit had no effect on his

hard mouth, and I did not like to belabour him with the whip, he had matters all his own way at first. The next day, when the cunning beast feigned to be very tired, and unable to keep up with the caravan, Shammo gave me some excellent advice as to the proper method of dealing with mules; and after I had once asserted my authority by means of the whip, I had no more trouble with him. But that night we had a trying time. From the saddle we could hardly see the ground before us; our animals often surprised us by taking a jump over some stream or small canal; and, despite their character for surefootedness, they stumbled continually. Our *zaptieh* proved worse than useless, for whenever the barking of dogs betrayed the presence of an Arab encampment, he always led us a big detour around it, asserting that it was a place of robbers. Finally he admitted that he had no idea which way to go. By that time the muleteers were in a state of genuine alarm. They had very soon taken the bell off the leading mule of the caravan, lest it should attract robbers, and they continued urging us to return to Guba Mahmoud. That, however, was the last thing in the world that we intended to do. We wandered on—for it was too cold to stand still—until we were brought to a halt on the bank of an old canal down which the waters were rushing, white with spume, in a way that made our mules draw back shiveringly when we tried to force them at it. Plainly there was no hope of getting forward that way, so we floundered off towards some higher

ground away to the north, where we hoped to find a camp at which we could rest ourselves and our tired beasts till daylight.

As we had expected, we found that the mound was all that remained of some ancient town. The place that had once sounded with "the busy hum of men" was still as death—deserted, buried. But we were in no mood for moralising upon the changes of fortune which had brought things to such a pass. Our desire was to find some of the camel-hair tents that we felt positive would be pitched upon the dry ground in the neighbourhood; and sure enough, suddenly, just as we were dropping off to sleep in the saddle, we heard the welcome yelping of many dogs, and a few moments later we stumbled into a small camp.

The head-man came out and hospitably bade us welcome; and dismounting with alacrity, we made our way through the sheep which were lying asleep all round the camp, and entered the largest tent. It was of the usual type, very low, open on one side, and formed of brown and white striped cloth stretched over a framework of short poles. A small fire was burning in a hollow scooped in the centre of the floor, and when we entered fresh fuel was brought in, and a man was told off to attend to it. Chilled through as we were, we found the warmth very grateful; and after we had eaten and smoked we felt quite disposed to be satisfied with our quarters. Glancing along the tent we discovered that the central part, in which we were seated, was set apart for the use of the

men, and that the ends were partitioned off with hurdles. One of the compartments thus formed was occupied by the women and the children of the establishment, who shared their quarters with the poultry; and in the other section were half-a-dozen of the most valuable cows and buffaloes belonging to our hosts. From the women's quarters one or two unattractive ladies and several unwashed little brats regarded us with unwinking curiosity; but the men of the establishment treated us with the truest good-breeding. As soon as we showed an inclination to sleep, they hushed their voices; and although they could not leave us to ourselves, on account of want of space, they withdrew from our immediate neighbourhood.

After an all too short sleep, interrupted by the perambulations of a disreputable cat and other unwelcome visitors, we rose before the sun the next morning, and were very soon ready to start again. Daylight showed us that we had wandered far out of our way; but a son of our host put us on the right road, pointing out a large mound in the distance to which we had to direct our course, so that there was little fear of our making any further mistake.

The biting morning air was exhilarating, and we were disposed to look upon the bright side of things. But very soon our *zaptieh* chose to make himself objectionable, probably feeling that we had not treated him well overnight. He said that he had instructions to take us to a particular *khan*, and that as we were making for another one he

TWO ZAPTIEHS.

wished to leave us. In vain we pointed out to him that between us and the place he wished to go to lay a perfectly impassable swamp. He only reiterated that he must obey his instructions. Thereupon we told him to do as he pleased, that we were going to Mahmoudieh, and that we should get a fresh escort there, to whom we would hand over his *backsheesh*. That settled it. He came along with us quietly, and we reached Mahmoudieh at noon, after a most uncomfortable ride. It is a miserable little place at the best of times, consisting merely of a row of hovels scattered down a straggling street, with one large Government *khan*, a few smaller ones owned by private individuals, and a coffee-shop. At that time it looked deplorable, for the floods had inundated it, and the street resembled a canal. Fortunately, we stayed there for only an hour, making a meal and enjoying a smoke in the very dirty coffee-house. Then, with a couple of fresh *zaptiehs*, we set off for our next stage, to Khan Haswa.

The scenery was uninteresting: a vast plain over which the eye roved in vain in search of distraction. Only a few low mounds marked the sites of old-time cities or cemeteries, of which even the names are now forgotten; or longer lines of broken banks showed where in its more prosperous days the land was intersected by canals. At present, for want of a proper system of irrigation, the country is flooded every winter, and parched and thirsty every summer. Often enough we anathematised the powers responsible for such a state of

affairs, as we made wearisome detours to avoid great ponds and swamps, or supported our tired beasts while they floundered and splashed through the clinging mire. Through mud almost up to the girths we plodded on until evening fell, following the line of the telegraph poles; and about two hours after sunset we reached our night's halting-place.

Khan Haswa is a large building of comparatively recent construction, having been built to replace an older house, the ruins of which we had passed, some ten miles distant. We entered through a high arched doorway, and found ourselves in a fair-sized courtyard that was already occupied by the animals of two other caravans. The blaze of light from fires, torches, and lanterns almost blinded us after the outer darkness, but our eyes soon became accustomed to it, and we were able to inspect the picturesque scene. Around a small fire were seated some travellers, and one or two *zaptiehs*, who regarded the arrival of our party with much surprise, as Europeans do not usually make use of the *khans*. Their baggage animals were scattered about the court, making their evening meal, fighting for the fodder that was piled up in heaps on the floor, or rolling in the dust in their endeavours to rid themselves of their pack-saddles. The whinnying of the horses, the squealing of the mules and donkeys, and the far from melodious singing of the group around the fire, all tended to create an impression of Bedlam let loose. We were too tired to care much for that, however.

Picking our way through the kicking and plunging animals, we sought for the least dirty spot on which to unroll our beds, while Shammo hastily prepared a meal, with the assistance of our *zaptiehs*, who were very favourable specimens of their class, and willing to lend a hand at anything. After a hasty tour of inspection, which made us heartily regret that we had not followed the custom of most Europeans and brought our own tents with us, we chose as our sleeping-place one of the recesses in the porch, where our beds were laid out. As the recess was not very deep, we had to sleep with our legs sticking out in the air, protected from the wandering animals by a breastwork built up of our baggage; but neither that fact nor the noise caused by the restless beasts moving about in search of provender could keep us awake for long; and we slept as soundly as if we had been in the most luxuriously appointed hotel in the world.

The next morning we were aroused betimes by the bustling departure of the other caravans. After making the best toilet possible under the circumstances, we strolled out to have a look at the surroundings of the *khan*. A few mud huts were the only signs of human habitations. Over the roofs of these buildings the sheep and goats were playing on their way out to graze, while some mangy pariahs barked and snarled at the departing caravans. When we rode away we saw a few frowsy women and children hanging about the doorways, but there seemed to be no men in the place at the time.

Determined to reach Hillah that night, we took matters into our own hands and drove the caravan along at a good pace. This angered the muleteers, who protested volubly, and swore that they would never again have anything to do with such scatter-brained Englishmen. In the neighbourhood of the *khan* we saw many skeletons of camels and donkeys, and on the road more than once we disturbed vultures that were feeding on the carcases of luckless caravan beasts. We met a few travellers jogging along sedately on mules or donkeys, and occasionally a caravan of camels swayed by, either laden with merchandise or "going light," in charge of wild-looking Arabs. Thanks to the improved pace at which we travelled all the morning, we were able to call a halt at midday for an hour, which completely restored the good humour of the muleteers. This was at the little village of Mohaweel, where we changed *zaptiehs* for the second time that day. Soon after leaving there we came in sight of the famous ruins of Babylon; and, of course, we went out of our way to inspect the traditional Tower of Babel, which appeared as a great grass-grown mound with a moat-like canal around it. But we had no time to examine it closely then, and so rode on towards the modern town which occupies the site of Nebuchadnezzar's famous capital—or rather a part of its site. Over ancient bridges spanning still more ancient water-ways, up and down steep banks of disused canals, and through miles of mud we plodded, until at length we found ourselves amidst the palm orchards

and gardens that lie to the east of Hillah. Then our troubles for the time being were at an end. We were met by Shaoul Suleiman, the Jewish agent of the expedition, who had found us quarters and showed himself very anxious to be of service to us in every way. But he had no good news for us from Niffer.

It seemed that the tribes between Hillah and Diwaniyeh were fighting amongst themselves in real earnest, and that the military had been despatched from Hillah to endeavour to suppress the disturbance. Shaoul told us that the trouble had commenced with a quarrel between the Awadiyen and Wusultani. The sheikh of the latter tribe having been slain in a brawl, his followers had retaliated by raiding the cattle and sheep of the Wusultani and killing a dozen of their men. The Arabs are always ready for a fight, and some dozen tribes speedily took sides. Consequently the country below Hillah was overrun by armed warriors, whose numbers were estimated by the authorities at close upon twenty thousand. It sounded serious enough, but we saw no reason why we should be interfered with, as we were in no way connected with either of the combatant parties. However, Shaoul and Shammo both declared that it would be most risky to travel through the disturbed district, explaining that at such a time many robbers would be ready to take advantage of any chance of plunder. Shaoul added that it would be difficult to obtain a boat to take us on the last stage of our journey, as

everything afloat had been requisitioned by the governor for the transport of grain to Busreh; and he declared that it would be out of the question to travel overland owing to the floods and the fighting. In reply to these representations we pointed out that we had overcome many difficulties already, and were prepared to go forward entirely at our own risk; and seeing our minds so fully made up, Shaoul undertook to see what could be done in the way of finding a boat for us, and announced himself ready to accompany us.

The next morning we called upon the governor of the town and some of the principal inhabitants. Everywhere we went we were received most courteously, but everybody tried to dissuade us from going forward. In the afternoon we received return visits, and were pestered by dealers in antiquities. The *antica* vendors invariably made a great show of mystery, much to our amusement; for we were perfectly aware that the officer appointed to suppress the traffic (a most delightful old gentleman, by the way) was himself one of the chief offenders. We were prohibited by our agreement from purchasing any antiquities, but the examination of those which were brought to us served to pass away some of the time of waiting.

After two days' diplomatic effort Shaoul managed to hire a *sefinah*. Like all the other boats at Hillah, this one had been requisitioned by the governor; but the captain was very anxious to

return to his home at Affech, near Niffer; and His Excellency had allowed himself to be persuaded by the silver tongue of Shaoul's eloquence, backed by the *nokador's* entreaties. Without inquiring too closely into the transaction, we ratified the contract between Shaoul and the *nokador*, and embarked late in the afternoon. As we had no tents with us, we arranged to sleep in the boat, and took some reed mats with us to form an awning. Shammo had bought us a native lantern in the bazaars, and we had plenty of candles amongst our stores. As soon as our belongings were all on board, we bade good-bye to Shammo, and stepped on board with Shaoul, our departure being watched with much interest by a considerable crowd, who evidently fancied they were seeing the last of us.

As the wind was favourable, the captain determined to make the most of it, and we journeyed on until nearly midnight. There was little variety in the scenery along the banks: villages, palm gardens, and cultivated lands succeeded each other monotonously; but the quiet drifting was delightful, with the bright stars overhead and their almost equally bright reflections on the bosom of old Euphrates, who bore us on so smoothly between his shadowy banks and past his sleepy villages. Despite the reported dangers ahead of us we both slept soundly.

The next morning we were towed by our crew for some time. Then a light breeze sprang up astern, and we hoisted our triangular sail and

slipped along gaily until we came to Hayghan. Ordinarily there would be nothing worthy of remark about the place. It is just a mud-built village on the east bank of the river, flanked by the desert. But the moment we came in sight of it, we saw that something out of the common was going forward there. In a palm grove there were lines of conical army tents, cavalry horses were picketed under the trees, and armed sentinels patrolled the banks. As we drew opposite the camp, a sentinel challenged. Our *nokador* shouted a reply and held steadily on. Thereupon the soldier brought his carbine to his shoulder and shouted instructions which led to our lowering our sail and drawing in to the bank.

After a few questions and answers had passed between the sentry and him, Shaoul turned to us and explained that the *kaimakam* of Hillah, who was engaged in the pacification of the country, was in the place, and that we should have to see him before we could be allowed to proceed. The commandant was lodged in the best house in the place, and thither we suffered ourselves to be led by a *chaoush*, or corporal, wondering what new bother was in store for us. We found the officer surrounded by his suite and the principal men of the village, drinking coffee and smoking. He received us very civilly, invited us to take the seats of honour next himself, and pressed refreshments upon us. But our attempts at conversation could not be regarded as brilliantly successful. Neither of us knew any Turkish at all; Mr.

ARAB CRAFT ON THE EUPHRATES.

Duncan's Syrian Arabic seemed to puzzle Shaoul and the rest of the company considerably; and though I had managed to pick up enough of the language to make known my simpler wants, I could not pretend to follow any conversation. Under the circumstances, a good deal of vigorous pantomime and gesticulation were necessary, and I found it difficult to suppress my laughter at some of the dumb-show. However, it was made quite clear to us that we were not to think of going forward. The *kaimakam* observed, in truly Turkish fashion, that we might be delayed only a few hours, until a reconnoitring party that he had sent out returned; but we felt little inclined to look upon his promise at all hopefully. There was nothing for us, however, but to obey, so we yielded with the best grace we could.

Then commenced the most aggravating period of aimless delay in all our experiences on our luckless journey. We were virtually prisoners on parole. Quarters were allotted to us in an uninhabited house belonging to one of the rich men of the village, a friend of Shaoul's, as we subsequently discovered, and thither all our belongings were removed. The premises consisted of one large room and three or four smaller ones, built on two sides of a walled courtyard. The large room was half-full of plaited baskets or bags, which were intended to pack dates in for export, but as it was cleaner than either of the small ones we chose it for our lodging. By piling up some of the bags to a suitable height in one corner of the room, and

covering them with our rugs, we made a comfortable divan to sit on during the day and to sleep on at night, and another pile did duty as a table. We were allowed to stroll about the village and camp quite as we pleased, although there was always a guard with us. At first we whiled away the time by watching the soldiers cooking their meals, cleaning their accoutrements, and grooming their mounts. The men were all of good physique, and their discipline was better than we had been led to expect. All their horses were white, and seemed wiry, serviceable animals, though rather small.

Soon after our arrival we observed two large bands of Arabs hovering about on the other side of the river in the distance. Whether they meditated a combined attack on the village, or were about to fight one another, we could not make out. They drew off very soon, and were lost to sight in the desert. The phlegmatic way in which the Turks took this demonstration surprised us. Beyond a scanning of the distant bands through field-glasses, and a little speculation on the chances of a fight, they paid no attention to the incident. This is, of course, the usual policy of the Turk towards the Arab. He lets the combatants expend all their energies in fighting each other; and when they are sick of it, and their powers are thoroughly crippled, he steps in and fines both parties.

One night in our room, in company with an old guard who coughed and snored the whole time, determined us to get away the next morning without asking anybody's leave. But it was not

to be. When we embarked in our *sefinah*, the *kaimakam* sent for us again, and after reading us a long lecture, which we could not understand, declined to let us go. He even went so far as to imprison our *nokador*, and only released him upon our giving a distinct promise not to attempt to make any further move without leave.

What was the real reason for our detention I have never been able to make out. Perhaps the *kaimakam* sent to Baghdad for instructions what to do with us; probably somebody expected to make a *backsheesh* out of it; or perhaps some interested person sought to prevent us getting to Nippur. Whatever the cause, we began to fear that we should never get away from Hayghan. From Shaoul we could make out nothing. He appeared genuinely anxious to go on to Niffer, where he certainly had business with some local merchants; but he also stood in great fear of giving offence to the *kaimakam* and other authorities. Every day we held long confabulations with him, but he always wound up by urging patience. Assuredly we required all the patience we possessed!

During our detention the sheikh of the Wusultani and three of his sons were brought captives to Hayghan, and emissaries of the tribe kept coming to the village to treat for their release. One morning a report spread that the Arabs had combined their forces and were on the point of attacking the place. Accordingly it was put into a state of defence. The parapets of the houses

were loopholed, sentries were doubled, and a strong cavalry party was despatched to reconnoitre. We wanted to follow them, but were forbidden to do so, and moreover there were no horses to be procured in the place. Soon after the departure of the cavalry a panic seized the villagers. The men and boys who were left in the place rushed to arms and gathered at the south of the village; and the women flocked to the same spot, to admire their gallant warriors and hearten them to valiant deeds by their shrill cries and yells. When they considered their numbers sufficiently strong the men marched off, in extremely irregular order, and were finally lost to sight. We had observed that they took pains to keep the cavalry between themselves and the position in which the enemy was reported to be; and we subsequently learned that they had contented themselves with this demonstration of their valour, and that the Hayghan field-force had not been engaged in any fight. Nor had the cavalry seen fit to interfere, although a big fight had really taken place between the Arabs. Report had it that three hundred men had been killed in the battle. That estimate had certainly to be largely discounted, but stiff fighting had undoubtedly taken place, as we were able to see for ourselves when at last we resumed our journey.

After we had been vegetating five days in Hayghan, Shaoul came to us and said he thought there was a chance for us to be off. He looked very mysterious, and threw out hints that the *mudir* would be the best person to apply to. We con-

cluded that this meant a little judicious bribery ; and accordingly we gave Shaoul instructions to do the best he could for us. As a result of his efforts, we had an interview with the *mudir* from which that worthy old gentleman went away highly pleased. Next the *kaimakam* sent a message to us, that if we chose to take the risk upon our own heads, and could persuade a certain priest from a neighbouring village, who was held in high respect throughout the country, to accompany us, there would be no objection to our departing, as the worst of the fighting was over. We lost no time, but hastily embarked on our *sefinah* once more, and to the great delight of our captain and ourselves got clear of Hayghan at last.

III

AFTER the weary time of captivity, it was glorious to be on the river again, spinning along before a favourable breeze. No wonder that our captain and crew broke into song in their delight at our escape. Out of sheer light-heartedness we should have joined in chorus with them if we had been sufficiently versed in knowledge of Arabic melody. As it was, we listened complacently to their startling efforts, and even staid Shaoul smiled indulgently as he sniffed at the air and murmured that it was good. We declined to consider the chance that we might fail to persuade the holy man to come with us as our protector; for that would have meant a return to the sheltering wing of the *kaimakam*, in accordance with our promise; and we could not contemplate the idea at all happily.

In about two hours we reached a small hamlet, known as Hayghan-the-Less, where lived the *seyyid* on whom our hopes rested. We landed, and were conducted straightway to the guest-house, where we were received by the sheikh. He was a young man, and had only just succeeded to the dignity of his office, his father having been killed in the recent

fighting ; but he received us with a graceful courtesy that comes naturally to the well-bred Arab, and offered us the customary coffee and cigarettes. Soon after our arrival, the priest put in an appearance, and Shaoul opened out the proposal that he should accompany us. For some time the holy man declined all offers. Then he led us outside the guest-house, hoping to be able to drive a good bargain in privacy. But his desire was frustrated by an interested crowd who followed us and insisted on offering their advice on the subject. However, he allowed himself to be persuaded into going with us at last, and went off to bid farewell to his family.

While he was gone, we wandered in the narrow alleys of the village. There we saw several wounded men, each of them surrounded by a group of sympathisers. One poor wretch, who appeared almost at his last gasp, had been brought out of his house into the open, and was having his wounds dressed by a wrinkled crone in full view of a gaping crowd. Small bundles of herbs had been thrust into his nostrils, and his wounds, which were obviously spear-thrusts, after being plastered with chewed leaves and herbs, were bound up with filthy rags. Throughout the operation the poor fellow groaned and gasped, and his wives and friends kept up a noisy lamentation. Of course it would have been useless for us to offer assistance, even if we had possessed any remedies, since our ideas of the proper treatment of such wounds differed greatly from those of the lady-surgeon. We could do no

good, and were therefore heartily glad when the *seyyid* rejoined us and announced himself ready to proceed.

Below Hayghan-the-Less we turned off from the river down the Daghara Canal. As we advanced, signs of the late fighting became more and more numerous. Near almost every village wounded horses were hobbling about. We passed many mourning parties conveying their dead home amid weeping and wailing; and once or twice our boat was pressed into service to ferry funeral parties across the river. At one spot, which we passed at night, the Giboor tribe had assembled all their *sefinahs*, to the number of fifty or more, and we were challenged as we drifted by. Then the value of our *seyyid* was made apparent to us, for he landed and explained matters to the sheikh, and we were allowed to pass unmolested. When we lay to for the night, beside a large camp of the Awadiyen, we were invited to the sheikh's tent; but as we did not wish to associate ourselves with either party of the combatants, we preferred to sleep on our boat. One of our crew belonged to the Wusultan tribe, and he must have felt anything but comfortable in the stronghold of his enemies; for if he had been discovered there is no doubt that he would have been killed at once; but by donning the Awadiyen head-gear and keeping out of notice he came safely through the danger.

In the morning we were aroused by the sound of violent lamentations. On rising we found that a party of mourners were bearing a couple of the

slain on to our boat for conveyance to a village some little distance off. The women made a great display of grief, tossing their arms about, tearing their hair, and beating their breasts, but the men looked on with indifference, real or assumed. Remonstrance from us would have been not only heartless but quite useless, and the party took possession of the forepart of the boat, where the moaning and groaning of the women was renewed with vigour as soon as they became aware of a fresh audience. When the *sefinah* was pushed out from the bank and towed off by the crew, the lamentations rose to a shriek, and were answered by a parting chorus of groans from the friends of the deceased who were left ashore. But as soon as we were well under weigh, silence fell upon the scene. The two rigid forms on the foredeck, surrounded by the group of mourners, looked particularly impressive in the half-light of dawn. Gradually the sun rose, tinging the sky with a lovely golden colour, against which the banks, dotted here and there with reed huts sharply silhouetted, stood out boldly. Soon after he was well up, we reached the village which had been the home of the two dead Arabs, where a really touching scene took place. As the bodies were being taken ashore, a group of villagers came to meet them, headed by a young girl of fourteen or fifteen. When the rough biers were set down, this poor girl threw herself upon one of them, kissing the dead man and sobbing and crying in an utter abandonment of grief, before which the artificial

wailing of the older women gave way to genuine emotion, and even the men's stoicism was sorely tried.

From almost every village and camp that we passed sounds of mourning reached us, and signs of the evil done by the war were abundant on every side. Flocks and herds were gathered together near the houses for safety, the work of irrigation was neglected, many of the houses and *kishiks* showed bullet marks, and sometimes entire villages were deserted. Indeed, the whole country presented a most melancholy aspect. The Arabs wandered about in armed parties. Some of them displayed anything but a friendly attitude towards us, and many times bands insisted on searching our *sefinah* to make sure that none of their enemies were concealed on board. On one of these occasions, in the very early morning, I had an unpleasant experience. A particularly truculent party had searched the boat, and were displaying a desire to pick a quarrel with our people. Mr. Duncan was asleep, and as I was ignorant of what all the fuss was about I was pretending to study an Arabic Grammar, when suddenly I became aware that the leader of the party had put the muzzle of his gun to the back of my head. There was nothing for me to do but to keep cool and sit still, my chief fear being that somebody would excite the fellow, when the consequences might have been fatal to me. I could make out, by the tone of his voice, that the captain was trying to soothe the ruffian's excitement; and subsequently I found that he had

been pointing out the senselessness and danger of killing a *firenghi*. His argument was that although the local sheikhs might not care what was done, the British consul at Baghdad would certainly never let the murder of an Englishman pass unavenged, and that no earthly good could come of shedding my blood. Fortunately for me his point of view prevailed, and the Arab removed his weapon from its unpleasant proximity to my skull. Had anyone offered to interfere forcibly, it is tolerably certain that I should not have been alive to write these lines; for the spirit of mischief was in the party, and it only required a spark of opposition to kindle it to a blaze. Happily my own ignorance of how to act, coupled with the good sense of the *nokador* and Shaoul, averted the danger. But I was heartily thankful when the band left the boat.

Below the village of Daghara things were more settled, but we heard that only a few days before our arrival there a band of desperadoes had ridden into the place and looted it in broad daylight. It is the largest place between Hillah and Niffer, with a population of about thirteen hundred. Half the houses are built of mud, and the rest are wattled huts and reed-mat hovels. It boasts a *serai*, which is in a very tumble-down state, a covered bazaar, and a coffee-shop; and it is governed by a *mudir*, who has a dozen *zaptiehs* under his orders. Although the village is divided by the canal into almost equal parts, there is no bridge to connect the two sections. A rope is stretched from bank to bank, by means

of which the large *goupha* that serves as ferry-boat is drawn from side to side as required. When a large boat wants to pass, the rope is slackened out, but small craft are thrust under it. Owing to the low level of the banks the place is subject to frequent inundations, and it is naturally a most unhealthy spot. Soon after leaving it we came in sight of some great conflagrations, which were caused by the Arabs firing the reeds and flags of the marshes in order to produce better feed for their buffaloes. As the darkness closed in, the effect of these fires was really grand. The walls of fire, over thirty feet high, sometimes appeared two or three miles long, and the roaring of the flames could be heard quite a couple of miles away.

Picking our way through a network of canals, we came in sight of Niffer just before sunset on 15th February, eleven days after leaving Baghdad. Soon afterwards we landed at the spot on the canal nearest the mounds, whence we despatched one of the boatmen to the camp to announce our arrival. While we waited for men to fetch our baggage, several Arabs came up and tried to carry on a conversation with us. Shaoul told us that they came from a village hard by, and that one of them was the sheikh, who wished us to become his guests for the night; but as we preferred to go immediately to the camp, we declined the offer of hospitality. Soon, as we waited there in the fast gathering darkness, we heard the sound of men running, and in a few minutes a score or more of Arabs surrounded us and began kissing our hands

and evincing every sign of delight at seeing us. These were some of the expedition's workmen, who had been sent by Mr. Haynes to carry our baggage to the house, and under their escort we set out.

I need not go into the details of our arrival and our reception by Mr. Haynes. Nor is this the place for me to give any description of the camp or the mounds, since I saw so little of them at the time. It must suffice to say that Mr. Haynes expressed himself delighted to know that we had got through to him in safety, as he had never expected that we should be able to do so. But he declared that he considered it would be impossible for us to remain at Niffer after his departure, because the Arabs were showing a very hostile spirit, and we should therefore run too much risk. Under the circumstances, he said, he would take upon himself the responsibility of ordering us to return to Baghdad with him. We had no choice but to obey, under the terms of our agreements; but we yielded most reluctantly, being quite prepared to take our chance and stay on. The next three days were spent in inspecting portions of the site under his guidance, and in assisting his preparations for departure. The mounds struck us as a splendid field for excavations, and we were both deeply distressed at the thought of our powerlessness to remain and continue the work. But Mr. Haynes resolutely declined to allow us to do so. He told us many stories of the treachery and difficulties he had had

to contend against, and declared that with our inexperience of the people we should never be able to carry on the work for a single week. He also said that he would not be able to leave his Turkish servant, Mustapha, who acted as his interpreter to the Arabs, behind; and that without some trustworthy person to warn us against the wiles of the natives, our lives would be in the greatest danger. In point of fact, it seemed to us that it would be wiser not to rely upon a Turk as interpreter and "intelligence officer," as the Arabs and Turks thoroughly hate each other; but our ideas were set aside and we were forced to yield, obediently to our agreements.

In the camp with him Mr. Haynes had a number of workmen (with their families) from Hillah, who were all to return with us to their homes. There were also quantities of antiquities which had to be taken to Hillah to be packed, so that we had to employ three or four boats for the journey. But everything was ready for the start on the 19th of the month; and on that day, after a somewhat stormy scene with two of the local sheikhs, we set out for Baghdad once more.

We reached Hillah on the 23rd, and stayed there until 9th March, packing the antiquities for shipment to Constantinople and America. During that time I paid my first visit to Birs Nimroud and Tel el-Heimar, and revisited Babel. I also made good progress with my Arabic, aided by several willing teachers amongst the workmen, so that, although I was weak in the grammar, I had

acquired quite a respectable vocabulary before I left for Baghdad.

The floods had subsided greatly by the time we set out for Baghdad, and we were able to ride right into the city. At our departure from Hillah we were accompanied by a score of workmen, all dressed in their best clothes and carrying guns, who trotted beside our horses and sang *hosehs*. They came half-way to Mohaweel with us, and before turning back they all fired their guns in a final salute and executed a short dance.

The journey to Baghdad took us three days, and we reached the city thirty-six days after we had left it. Immediately upon our arrival we learned that Mr. George Clark, the manager of Messrs. Lynch's Baghdad house, and Mr. Cree had almost completed their arrangements for travelling overland to Damascus and Beyrout, and as we purposed taking the same route ourselves we naturally joined forces. Our united caravans reached Damascus on 20th April, after a journey that was full of interest to all of us. As I was destined to travel over much of the same road again, I shall reserve all description of it for a later chapter. From Damascus we took train to Beyrout, where our party broke up. In little more than six months after leaving England I reached Harwich, and my wanderings were over for a time. My disappointment at being compelled to turn my back on the work, after a glimpse at it which had only made me more anxious than ever to see more of it, was keen; but the next winter I was fortunate enough to have

a season's excavating in Egypt with Professor Petrie at Deshasheh, and with Mr. Grenfell and Mr. Hunt at Oxyrhynchus. That experience stood me in good stead when next I visited Nippur, as the following pages will show.

MARKET SCENE AT SANDAFEH.

IV

BETWEEN lawless, unsettled, poverty-stricken and neglected Mesopotamia and well-ordered, flourishing, tourist-thronged Egypt there is a vast difference. In the Turkish land the agriculturist exists, when he manages to do so at all, in despite of the Government's neglect, or, worse still, of its oppression. With painful drudgery he ploughs and sows his land; with still more painful drudgery, by means of his clumsy *churds*, he draws the water for its irrigation from the uncertain Tigris or the fickle Euphrates; and as his crops spring up, he must guard them, if he can, from being trampled upon by wandering cattle, or ridden over by some tyrannical soldier or *zaptieh* out of sheer wantonness. When the grain is nearly ready for reaping and harvesting, he watches with an anxious eye, lest Bedouin raiders, or some greedy Pasha, or his greedier underlings, pounce upon it and rob him of his all. Fervently he hopes that Allah will protect him from the oppressor; and if his prayers and toil and anxiety finally prevail, and he reaps the fruit of his labour, he counts himself fortunate beyond measure; but if misfortune befalls him, he accepts it as the usual lot of his kind, and

faces his poverty or ruin with a passivity that speaks volumes for the history of his race.

Very different is the lot of the Egyptian *fellah*. True, he must labour well-nigh incessantly: that is his inevitable portion, as it was the portion of his forefathers in the land from time immemorial. True also, he is governed by a foreign race: that, likewise, has been his fortune for centuries. Hyksos, Persian, Greek, Roman, and Arab masters have ruled him, as now the English rule him; but their yoke has never crushed him utterly, nor has it left its mark on his changeless character. Nature and good government help him. He has only to sow the seed in the rich Nile mud and to water it from the great river, which may be relied upon for a regularly controlled supply, and his labour is sure of its reward. No oppressor grinds his face; and he has not even that anxiety about the weather which is such a bugbear to the English farmer; for hail and rain are things almost unknown in his fortunate land, and the very wind seems to be as regular as the rise and fall of the Nile. Twice a year, and sometimes thrice, he reaps his crops; and his life is as easy as the life of his own placid buffaloes and cattle. It may be a monotonous round, but it suits the *fellah*. No wonder that he is childlike, and that his eyes have a sleepy expression which reminds you of a sleek, contented cat. He perpetually basks in the sunshine, and if he has no stirring pleasures, neither has he any pressing cares and anxieties.

To anybody who wanted to escape from the

bustle of modern life and to settle into a fixed groove, in order to obtain the perfect peace of monotony, I would say by all means go and live in Egypt. Only do not fix on a spot right on the Nile, for there—in the season—you will see the tourists flocking up and down the river in their very much modernised *dahabiyehs*, or their "luxuriously appointed" steamboats; and they will probably break in on your peace and solitude, after the fashion of the tourist, in their restless search for antiquities and ruins. The proximity of the railroad, too, might prove an annoyance, for if anything can disturb the sleep of Egypt it will be the busy snorting engine with its trail of stuffy carriages clattering behind it. For my own part, I looked upon the railroad as a nuisance, and it was not until I was out of its vicinity that I felt myself really in Egypt—the Egypt of my imagination, home of mystery and land of memories. My first impressions of Cairo had been disappointing ones, for it was far too modern and Europeanised to suit my tastes; and it was only on a longer acquaintance that I grew to like the city at all. However, I need not write of the capital and its sights, or of places that are well known to everybody. I shall try only to give some idea of the excavating work at which I helped during the winter of 1896 and 1897.

After a week's stay in Cairo we took train for Beni Mazar, which is the nearest station to Behneseh, the spot that Professor Petrie intended to investigate in the first place. It should be ex-

plained that he had a permit from the Department of Antiquities to excavate anywhere in the strip of desert between the Fayoum and Minieh, and that Mr. Grenfell and Mr. Hunt were to share in the work.

At Beni Mazar we were met by the Professor's right-hand man, Ali Suefi, who undertook to gather together our belongings and see to their transport to Sandafeh. Thereupon my chief rode off on a small donkey, being naturally eager to see the site, and I was left to superintend Ali and the two men he had brought with him, at their work of loading goods on to the hired camels. I soon found that my Arabic was not much use, as the Egyptian dialect differs markedly from the Baghdad and Syrian, but that did not matter greatly, since Ali knew exactly what had to be done and the best way to do it. He was a bright and capable fellow, and I took to him instantly. He and his assistants worked so expeditiously that we were able to set off about half an hour after the Professor.

Sandafeh is a large village standing on the east bank of the Bahr Yusuf (or Joseph's Canal), immediately opposite Behneseh and about ten miles from Beni Mazar. For half that distance there was a fairly good road along the top of an embankment, but beyond that point we found the going heavy, owing to the soft state of the ground after the inundations; several times I had to make use of one of the men's donkeys to cross particularly bad parts, and at one spot one of the camels spilt its load in the mud; so that it was not until

night had fallen that we reached our destination. There we became the guests of the head-man of the village, Sed Ahmed, who was building a fine new house for himself, in which he invited us to pass the night. He was most hospitable, and expressed great pleasure that we were to be such near neighbours. Of course, all the notabilities of the place flocked in to pay their respects; but we were both tired and hungry, and, as I did not understand much of the conversation, I felt heartily glad when supper was served. It was brought in on a huge brass tray, which was set on a low stool; and we drew up round the food and fell to with small ceremony. Two smart policemen, guests like ourselves, amused me very much. As there were only four spoons, of which Sed Ahmed, Professor Petrie, and I each had one, the two policemen had to share the remaining one between them; and to see one of them take a spoonful of food and then endeavour to pass the spoon under the tray to his companion without being observed was certainly funny. The local celebrities felt no scruple about using their customary aids, their fingers, in conveying their food to their mouths, and I fancy our host would have preferred to follow suit had not his wish to appear "European" restrained him. After supper, polite conversation was resumed, and lasted so long that I very nearly disgraced myself by falling asleep. Fortunately one of the policemen, seeing how tired we were, dropped a hint to the company at large, who thereupon withdrew. Beds were brought in for us and

spread upon the floor, and in a few minutes we were both sound asleep. The next morning we crossed the canal in a ferry-boat, accompanied by Sed Ahmed and as many of the Sandafeh folk as could squeeze on board, and very soon fixed on a place for our camp in a date-palm grove to the south of the village.

We found Behneseh a very tumble-down and forsaken place, surrounded by high rubbish-heaps and extensive burial-grounds. It is safe to say that long ago it would have been deserted altogether if its cemetery had not been held in high esteem on account of the number of holy men who are buried there. As it is, the village is still considered a desirable dwelling-place by a few conservative-minded folk, and at certain festivals large crowds flock to it, to visit the shrine of an eminent saint, Dakruri, which lies about a mile out in the desert upon a low ridge of limestone. The reason for the decline of the place is not far to seek. Standing on the edge of the desert, it is very open to attacks and raids by the Bedouin; and so most of its inhabitants have been driven across the canal to Sandafeh, the new town growing steadily at the expense of the old one. Under the Roman rule, when it was called Oxyrhynchus, and in the Middle Ages, Behneseh was a flourishing place with splendid public buildings and fine private houses. When rambling over the great rubbish-heaps, amongst which the huts and hovels of the present village stand, I frequently saw remains of beautiful tile-work, which told tales of its past glories in

Arabic days; and the finds we made in the mounds proved what an important position Oxyrhynchus must have held. Now it is nothing but a mass of ruins, its mosques almost deserted, their minarets tumbling down piecemeal, and nine-tenths of its houses already half-buried in débris. Yet seen from the desert, or from the Sandafeh side of the canal, it looks quite a picturesque little place.

When we were ready to commence excavations, we had no difficulty in procuring workmen, the juvenile population proving especially keen in their anxiety to earn *backsheesh* by *wuruq* hunting. Indeed, there was considerable rivalry between the two villages in the matter, which now and again caused little hitches in the work. For instance, the Behneseh men one morning refused to allow the ferry-boat to cross the canal to fetch the Sandafeh contingent. When we inquired why there were no men from the other village at work, we were told that they had "gone to work in the fields and did not wish to dig any more"; but shortly afterwards the missing hands turned up, very wroth at the trick which had been put upon them and anxious to make a disturbance. However, both sides soon discovered that such manœuvres did not pay them, and that there was ample employment for all steady workers; and thereafter they confined their rivalry to seeing who could earn the most pay and *backsheesh*, with happy results. Pay-day always proved a highly exciting time for them, and the settlement of accounts between the members of the various gangs usually

caused much squabbling and bickering, and not infrequently led to scuffles. The men were paid according to the quantity of earth moved, and for all antiquities found they received suitable *backsheesh*. Very soon some of them developed into excellent workers, and many of them were able to put by a useful nest-egg as the result of their season's employment. At first most of them disliked digging in the old cemeteries, fearing that the bodies they discovered were those of "true believers"; but after their fears on that score were once set at rest, they were always keen enough in clearing out any tomb which seemed likely to earn them a reward. Their readiness to take our word on this and any other question was a remarkable testimony to the high opinion held by the *fellah*, as a rule, concerning the truth and fair dealings of the English. The first mummy we discovered caused quite a panic amongst the men. The gang who found it no sooner realised what it was than they threw down their tools and fled, and it was some time before they could be persuaded to return to their work. To them the discovery was an uncanny thing. My own feeling concerning the find was one of considerable disappointment; for the mummy, which was of a late period, was simply laid in the soil, and looked like a particularly dusty and untidy brown paper parcel; wrapped in its cloths it lay among the débris in which the shallow grave had been dug, with no sign or inscription to tell us to whom the body had belonged. Only its small size showed that it was that of a child.

EXCAVATING AT THE BEHNESEH "RUBBISH HEAPS."

A very short time spent in examining the rubbish-heaps of Oxyrhynchus sufficed to show Professor Petrie that whatever might be found in the neighbourhood would belong to a late period. No traces of the ancient Egyptian burying-ground could be discovered, although he explored the desert for some miles behind the town. The ground lay very low, and was consequently so damp that it seemed likely that whatever it contained would have been entirely spoilt by the moisture. Nobody dreamed what a rich haul of papyri was to reward the labour of Mr. Grenfell and Mr. Hunt; and the prospects of a successful season's dig looked far from bright. When the finders of the now famous Logia arrived, a few days before Christmas, Professor Petrie promptly handed over the work at Behneseh to their charge, and set out to explore the rest of his concession. I remained behind, and consequently saw the commencement of the great haul of papyri. The cemetery of the Roman period yielded next to no results, and the buildings of the town had been demolished for the sake of their bricks and stones. In a small cemetery of the Twenty-second Dynasty a few mummies were found, decked with beads of glazed pottery; one or two stone sarcophagi were uncovered, and fragments of painted coffins, amulets, a few small bronzes, a stele or two, some crude *ushabitis*, and similar trifles were obtained; and minor articles, such as ivory hairpins, dice (very numerous, and usually throwing a large proportion of "sixes"!), fragments of glass, pottery

and earthenware, reed pens and baskets, and roughly-carved figures of men and animals, were dug up at various parts of the site. But the papyrus was the only thing that could be regarded as worth digging for. Fortunately that was found in such quantities as to put the success of the excavations beyond all question.

Throughout my stay at Behneseh I kept my eyes open, and learned as much as I could of the excavator's craft, and my knowledge of Arabic increased rapidly. It was a very happy time for me, for I basked in the perpetual sunshine, and found the work and the workmen deeply interesting. The life of the villagers was, of course, extremely simple; nearly all the men and boys of Behneseh were employed on the excavations, and much of the work in the fields—more than is usual even in Egypt, where the women do their full share always — was undertaken by their wives, mothers, and sisters; but a few old men continued to earn their living by fishing. They fish in a style which is, I believe, peculiar to the Bahr Yusuf, standing on small rafts—which are, in fact, simply large bundles of reeds—and throwing a heavily-weighted circular net which is secured by a stout rope tied at its centre. The fishermen exhibit great skill in balancing themselves on their frail support and in throwing the heavy net —no easy matter even from *terra firma*, as I found by practical experiment; and as the canal is well stocked, they usually make a good catch in a few hours. Some of our men used to fish with lines

or rods in the evening, and once or twice I tried my luck that way, but I never caught anything at all, and the men usually had no better fortune. Occasional jaunts to Beni Mazar, to fetch money for the workmen's pay, kept me in touch with the world; and there I made the acquaintance of Mr. Taylor, an Englishman who held several important contracts under the Government. He always threw his house open to the members of our party, and showed us many kindnesses, which we all appreciated heartily. Sed Ahmed called several times upon us, and was most pressing with invitations to us to dine with him; but a dinner meant late hours, which would have interfered with the work, so we invariably declined his hospitality. Once or twice I attended the market of Sandafeh, which was held on Sundays. It was an animated scene always, for the *fellahin* from all the neighbouring villages flocked to the place with their simple wares and produce, and travelling pedlars brought cotton goods and cheap finery for the country belles. When the sugar-cane was cut, everybody one met was crunching away at a length of the sweet cane; and the sweetmeat sellers always drove a brisk trade with the youngsters of Sandafeh—and with their elders, too, for that matter. A good many horses, mules, and donkeys were usually offered for sale, but I seldom saw any bargaining for them. On the other hand, the quantity of cheap native pottery that was sold was astonishing, and the cloth and cotton sellers usually did good business. The market was also a recognised place for the

hiring of servants and workmen, and it was there that we first engaged hands for the digging.

As the result of his rapid survey of the belt of country over which his concession extended, Professor Petrie fixed upon an ancient cemetery, where two rock-cut tombs had already been partially cleared by the Department of Antiquities. Before returning to Behneseh he arranged for small huts to be built for our accommodation, within walking distance of the site; and by the time I arrived on the scene, our quarters were quite ready for us. The nearest village of any importance was Deshasheh, which lay a little to the east of the Bahr Yusuf, and some eighty miles south of Cairo; but hard by the sand-dunes on which our huts were built lay a small hamlet known as er-Rigeh, a very new place, inhabited by Arabs who were only in process of settling down and had not lost the nomadic instinct. Indeed, many of them still clung to their old form of dwelling, so that the hamlet consisted of a mixture of low mud huts and lower striped tents gathered round a good-sized house in which the sheikh dwelt. The latter building was chiefly noticeable on account of the number of large pigeon-cotes which decorated its walls and roofs. The sheikh had a high opinion of his own importance; but his people required delicate handling and much humouring, possessing as they did so much of the truly Ishmaelitic hatred of restraint and contempt for dwellers in houses. Owing to the newness of the place, there were few well-grown trees, but the plain between the canal

and the hills at the desert edge on which the old cemetery was located was under cultivation, being watered by a small canal that branched off from the Bahr Yusuf near our camp, and after making a loop, joined the main stream farther north. The tent-dwellers of the place went in for cattle-breeding, and owned many camels, while the more settled house-owners were chiefly employed in the fields. They were rather shy about taking work, and we found them less tractable than the people of Sandafeh and Behneseh. But several old hands of the Professor's who trudged over from the Fayoum helped to leaven the mass of raw material into a fairly workmanlike body.

I found the work itself entirely different from that at Behneseh. In place of shallow pits dug in the soft soil, such as we had found there, the new work lay on the rocky hills, and the shafts which gave access to its tombs were clean cut and often very deep. But the extra labour involved in clearing them out was rewarded by the perfect state of preservation in which their contents had been kept, thanks to the dryness of the site. Unfortunately some of the graves had been plundered in early times, but we found many untouched ones, and the work produced excellent results. With the scientific side of those results I need not concern myself; anybody interested in them should read Professor Petrie's account of the work in *Deshasheh*.[1] My wish now is to give some idea of

[1] Published by the Egypt Exploration Fund, 1898. It contains plans of the cemetery and many illustrations.

how the actual work of excavating was carried out.

Every morning we rose at daybreak, and after a hastily eaten breakfast, set out on our walk to the work, which lay at a distance of about two miles from the camp. The path led first through the cornland, and then across the pebbly plain to the plateau of limestone on which the cemetery lay. Those walks across the desert I look back upon with pleasure. The purity of the desert air, its freshness and exhilarating effect are things to be learned only by experience. To breathe such air is an inspiration; and the charms of the desert are at their best in the early hours of the day.

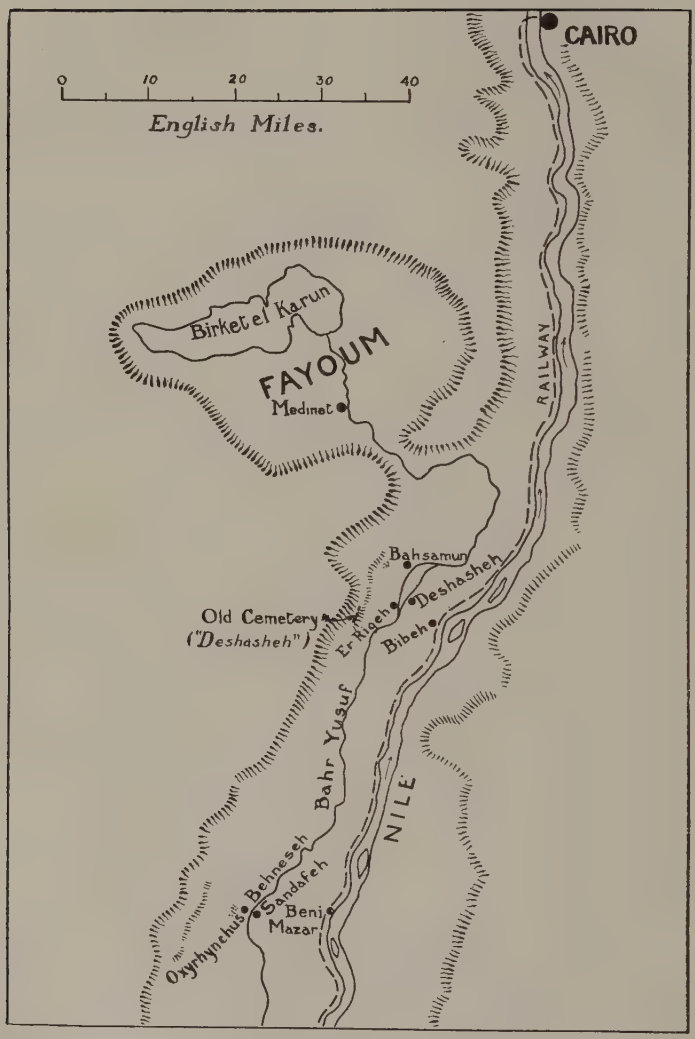
The old cemetery was scattered over seven of the spurs into which the plateau was broken on its eastern edge, and extended over half a mile in length. The tombs were fairly evenly distributed. The largest were those two already referred to as having been partially cleared by the Department of Antiquities. They were in the form of chambers cut in the sides of the rock, and their walls were decorated with sculptured scenes and inscriptions. The copying of these carvings, the measuring of the tombs, and the surveying of the site took up much of our time. In addition, some hundred and fifty smaller tombs were opened, and the contents of each one had to be carefully noted. No detail was too unimportant for attention: the position in which the bodies lay—extended, contracted, on the back or side; the condition of the grave — whether unopened, or

plundered in early times; the presence or absence of offerings and funereal objects,—all these things were observed and carefully recorded, and all of them were of service in aiding Professor Petrie to decipher the past. The thoroughness of the methods of my chief, his boundless resource and energy, and the way in which he met and overcame all obstacles, could not fail to command my utmost admiration, and I speedily began to understand how he had carved out for himself such a reputation as an Egyptologist. When he visited the work at Niffer, M. de Morgan said to me that he regarded Professor Petrie as the finest excavator in the world, and most assuredly the praise was fully merited.

To the reader, the examination of a cemetery may appear a gruesome occupation; and, to tell the truth, I felt a decided distaste for the work at first; but I soon consoled myself by reflecting that it was undertaken in a good cause; and with familiarity there grew up a genuine interest in it for its own sake. Moreover, the majority of the graves belonged to men and women who had been dead so long! And the absolute dryness of the soil reduced the unpleasantness of the work to a minimum.

Some of the tombs were very easily discovered, owing to the sinking in of the material that had been used for filling up the shafts after the burial. This was especially noticeable in cases where the graves had been plundered, when the double disturbance of the soil (and doubtless, also, the hurried

work of the robbers) had rendered the filling particularly loose. As soon as my eyes became trained to notice such details, I could generally distinguish the position of a tomb shaft by the different colour of the soil on its surface from that of the surrounding *gebel*. The shafts were usually well cut, square or oblong on plan, and provided with niches cut in their walls to afford foothold for the workers who made them. They varied in depth from ten to sixty feet, and at the bottom there would be one, two, or, in very rare cases, three, small chambers cut for the coffin or coffins. All this cutting work had been done with wooden chisels and mallets; and we actually found some of the tools that had been used, together with a reed basket with ropes tied to its handles, just as they had been left and forgotten by some workman of those old days. Their state of preservation was wonderful, and, of course, they were taken charge of for the museum. Fine examples of wooden coffins, painted and unpainted, were also found, and as they served to preserve the burials in a most perfect state, some of our best finds were made in them. In one we found a wardrobe which had been buried with its mistress, and I was thus able to look upon actual examples of the style of dress which I had previously known only from the carvings and paintings. The best preserved of the dresses was made of a fine white material, and was something like the garment worn by the modern Arab women, resembling a night-dress with very tight-fitting sleeves and a



SKETCH MAP OF PART OF THE NILE VALLEY, SHOWING SITES EXCAVATED, ETC.

V-shaped opening at the neck. Another interesting burial was that of an old man, who judging by his coffin and its furnishings must have been a person of some wealth. He had evidently had his leg broken during his life, and when the bone had set it had made the one leg shorter than the other; so that as an aid in walking he had used a stick, which had been buried with him in his coffin, where we found it.

When the position of a tomb shaft was ascertained, two or three men were set to work to commence clearing it. With a short-handled, triangular-bladed hoe (*turria*) one man raked up the loose gravel and scraped it into a basket placed between his feet. His mate seized the basket as soon as it was full, and emptied it beside the tomb, replacing it with a fresh basket. So the work went on until the digger got too far down the shaft to be able to lift the full basket up to his mate, when two more men joined the first hands. Then ropes were tied to the handles of the baskets, by which they were raised when full, swung clear of the shaft over to the dumping-ground, and there emptied by another hand—usually a lad. As soon as the tomb-chamber proper was reached, a picked man took charge of the more delicate work of clearing away the soil from the body or coffin. This part of the work necessitated great care, in order not to break up the body, so that its exact position might be accurately noted; and some of the older hands were wonderfully skilful at it. Ali, in particular,

could clean away the earth from a skeleton so that the bones would be left with only just enough to hold them in position. The deep-shafted tombs were usually extremely hot and stuffy when first opened, with a spicy odour peculiarly their own. The workmen always went up and down by means of the niches cut in the sides of the shafts, but for any deep one I preferred to use one of the rope ladders which we had with us. Of course it was very often necessary to have a light to work by, especially in examining the finds, and for this purpose there were always candles provided.

One of the most important and most interesting discoveries was a number of statues and statuettes of painted limestone. For some unknown reason they had been wilfully broken up, and their fragments were scattered about all round the remains of one of the tombs; but patient work and the greatest care in collecting chips and fragments resulted in the recovery and restoration of some really fine figures. They represent Nenkheftkha, "Prince of the southern town of the Oryx," his wife, and son. One of the best preserved of the statues is now in the British Museum. Professor Petrie says that it is "probably the finest piece of Egyptian sculpture that has yet reached Europe," and that "very few figures in Egypt are equal to it in vigour and character."

V

A FEW miles north of Deshasheh, near the village of Bahsamun, lay a cemetery and some remains of buildings of Roman times, which Professor Petrie desired to have examined. Accordingly, during a dull time, he despatched me to Bahsamun to excavate on a small scale for a fortnight, allowing me to take Ali as my foreman.

I found the village a most picturesque place, but its inhabitants turned out undesirables. The *sheikh e' gafir*, or head of the guard, was an ex-soldier who was known to have tried his hand at most forms of robbery, and to be ready to wink at any irregularities if it was made worth his while to do so; soon after I left the place, he committed a burglary in the house of a rich widow, after which he disappeared from the scene entirely, and was reported to have taken to the life of a highwayman. Under the circumstances, it was not to be wondered at that I found the villagers a hard crowd to deal with, for they looked upon me as an innocent lamb handed over to their tender mercies to be fleeced. However, determining to get along as best I might, I pitched my camp in a pretty grove of young palms on

the outskirts of the village. As soon as the tents were up, a truculent individual appeared upon the scene and tried to turn us off the ground. I felt convinced that the affair was none of his business, and therefore ignored him; and though he went away muttering threats, I never heard any more of him or his pretensions.

The next day I commenced work with only eleven men, as most of the people of the place appeared to prefer loafing to working at any price. The result of the dig was not particularly encouraging, for though we found a quantity of papyrus, hardly any of it was inscribed, and the burials were late and uninteresting. However, by giving a rather liberal *backsheesh* for the few trifles that were found, I obtained more workmen the next day, and set out with better hopes of success.

In the morning a ridiculous incident occurred. On my way across the desert from one part of the work to another, I was stopped by a ruffianly looking fellow, who carried a gun over his shoulder and a small arsenal in his belt. When I inquired what he wanted with me, he replied that he was "the guard of the desert," and could not allow me to dig at the mounds. I inquired what he guarded, and he replied by waving his arm in a comprehensive sweep which included the whole of the desert. I observed that it was a big place for one man to look after, and he gritted his teeth. Finding that impertinence would not avail him, he next tried politeness, explaining that as for

himself he would gladly see me excavate, but he feared to get into trouble unless I could prove to him that I had a permit to do so. I saw, of course, that his real object was *backsheesh*, but I affected to believe his statement, and told him that if he would give himself the trouble to walk over to Professor Petrie's camp, his anxiety in the matter would be set at rest instantly. A precocious youth who was with the impostor rather enjoyed his discomfiture apparently, and the fact irritated him considerably. He growled a request for "a writing to the *hawagur*." I ought to have kicked him, I suppose; but I found the business rather amusing, and was curious to see how far he would carry his bluffing; so I wrote a few lines and sealed the note with a strip of gummed paper. He took it and went off laughing insolently. I watched him and the boy out of sight behind a mound, and then, doubling, came upon them unawares. My note was open in the fellow's hand, and he and the boy were examining it curiously, although, of course, they could not read it. Thereupon I gathered up my very imperfect Arabic vocabulary, and flung at his head every term of abuse I could put my tongue to. He grew furious and advanced threateningly. I gave him a hearty shove into the boy, and when he had recovered his balance and breath I made him understand that I would report him to the sheikh, who would know how to deal with him, and that unless I had an apology for his impudent behaviour I should carry the matter to Bibeh. Seeing that I meant what I said, the

discomfited pair of conspirators slunk off, looking very small; and that evening the sheikh of the guards brought the elder offender to my tent to tender an abject apology. As Ali told me that the bluffer had been forced to *backsheesh* the guard, in order to avoid further punishment, I let the matter drop, and I had no more trouble with the villagers thereafter.

Bahsamun stands over a mile away from the canal, and draws its supply of water chiefly from wells. It has a greater variety of trees around it than any other village I saw on the Bahr Yusuf, and as many of its houses are built of red brick, it has a pleasant look about it. The bricks are obtained from the ruins of the Roman buildings, and a brisk trade is done in them with neighbouring villages. Under the circumstances, it was natural, perhaps, for the Bahsamun folk to regard my intrusion as a menace to what they regarded as a legitimate source of wealth.

Unfortunately most of the remains which have not been utterly spoiled by this brick-stealing process, lie under the cultivated lands, and the only parts I could investigate were those outside the belt of cultivation, and the burying-grounds, which lay well back in the desert. Just as at Behneseh, most of the land was low lying, and damp had sadly injured the tombs. The majority of those I opened were very shallow and lined with crude bricks; but the better class ones were sometimes twelve or twenty feet deep, and quite a number of them had two or three chambers of considerable size at the

foot of the shaft. In some of these chambers I found thirty, and in one case over forty burials; but invariably the tombs had been plundered, and nothing remained but the bodies all jumbled together pell-mell. In one tomb I had a curious experience. Ali had just cleared the entrance from the shaft as I came upon the scene, and as I looked into the chamber by the light of a candle, it seemed as if the place had never been touched. There were more than a dozen bodies, which were ranged round the walls, and the floor was covered with a thick layer of dust. The minute I stepped into the chamber I broke the crust of dust, and before my astonished eyes the whole contents of the tomb crumbled away instantly. It was rather an uncanny sight, but the explanation was simple enough. The dust had settled over the bodies, after the last burial, and becoming moist had practically taken a mould of everything that lay under it and hardened sufficiently to keep its shape as the shrinkage and sinking of what lay beneath had taken place. Utterly undisturbed, it had been strong enough to support its own weight, but, naturally, when I trod upon it the lot crumbled to powder.

A mile or more out in the desert were the ruins of an old fort, built of sun-dried bricks. The position was well chosen, on a mound overlooking a large area and commanding one of the approaches to the Fayoum. We found a lot of papyrus there, and some of my men told me that during their digging for bricks and *sebkha*, in late years, they had found large rolls of it, but not knowing that it was

of any value had destroyed it. We also dug up a number of unimportant articles, such as lamps, combs, glass, and pottery. In some cases I was surprised to find glass vases quite whole and sound, although they lay only a few inches below the surface. I remember finding a pair of them at the head of a grave, barely a foot beneath a much-used track, and yet quite undamaged.

Near the fort was a small cemetery containing graves of a better class than any others I found. Generally they were lined and covered with burned bricks, and contained solidly made wooden coffins, in which the bodies were laid wrapped in linen grave clothes and with woollen shawls over or round the heads. The colours of these shawls were often so fresh that it was difficult to think of them as the work of dyers of the Roman times. The hair and beards too had kept their colour remarkably. I well remember finding one grave in which the body of a man over six feet in height lay in a particularly well-made coffin. Over his head was a shawl with orange and green devices on a white ground, and when I removed that I saw his short hair and crisp curling beard, of a fiery-red colour, looking as natural as if he still lived, although the flesh of the face and body was shrunken and stretched tightly over the bones. The coffin was filled with rushes and twigs and herbs which still gave off a faint perfume. The general appearance of the grave showed that its occupant must have been a person of some distinction—probably the commandant of this desert fortress—and certainly he must have been a fine figure of a

ALI: PROF. PETRIE'S RIGHT-HAND MAN.

man to serve under. In this little graveyard all the bodies were those of men, and so many of them showed signs of having been wounded that there could be no doubt that they were the soldiers who had garrisoned the fort. Some of them must have been formidable fighters too, judging by the evidence of the hard knocks they had received. One man in particular, I recollect, had been wounded on the head twice or thrice, as there were marks on the skull to prove; but he seemed to have met his death from a comparatively trifling cut across the temple, which had eventually affected the bone on the outer corner of the eye. A find which puzzled me was that of a large earthenware pot which Ali hit upon quite accidentally in a sandy gully far removed from any trace of buildings. Most probably it had been buried, and served as a hiding-place for valuables of some kind; and when its purpose was accomplished, or it was accidentally discovered and promptly plundered by somebody, it was thought too large to be worth the trouble of removal. Another interesting find was a small building on a ridge of the foot-hills, where an anchorite had run up a tiny cabin for himself. Only the lower part of its walls was left, but on the floor there were a few earthenware platters which had served the holy man as eating and drinking utensils. In such an exposed situation, his abode must have been exceedingly hot and uncomfortable, for its walls were of the thinnest.

Apart from the actual digging, I had plenty to occupy my time. I did most of my own cooking;

in the evening I had usually a number of skulls to measure; and the day's finds had to be sorted and put away ready for taking to er-Rigeh. When these things had been seen to, I used to talk to Ali in order to practise my Arabic. He was always interested to hear about England and its institutions, and in return he used to give me information about the life of the *fellahin*. Ever since he was a small boy he had been excavating with his master, and he had a store of information on the subject of excavations that quite surprised me. Only once did he displease me at Bahsamun. That was when he tied his little niece to a palm tree and gave her a severe whipping for some trivial offence. I protested against such punishment, and insisted that he should let the girl go. This he did somewhat reluctantly, and that evening he told me very gravely that I had done wrongly to interfere with him. I told him Englishmen did not like to see girls or women beaten, but he replied that Egyptian girls had to be beaten sometimes for their own good, as it was the only way to make them obedient.

When I returned to er-Rigeh I found the work going forward smoothly, and everything else much as I had left it. Our chief bother was in finding and keeping a man who could cook satisfactorily for us. We had so many changes that I lost count of their number at last, and each man seemed worse than his predecessor. Another trouble to be faced was the prevalence of truly awful wind- and sand-storms. As our huts were built on a

sandhill and were not provided with doors, the sand and dust found its way into them in unpleasant quantities; and after a storm it was always necessary to strip the beds and shake the blankets very thoroughly to get rid of the sand, and the food was always plentifully besprinkled with grit. Another little pest took the form of an invasion by rats. They were very bold, and at night I often had three or four at a time scampering over my bed.

One of the characters of the place was our night watchman, Godi. He was an Arab, who had at one time made his living as a salt smuggler; but when the two tombs had been cleaned out by the Department of Antiquities, Godi had been appointed their custodian, and had their keys in his keeping; and feeling then that it would hardly do to combine the callings of smuggler and Government employee, he abandoned his former trade. "But," as he naïvely explained to me, "the business was too good to be allowed to fall through," so he made arrangements with one of his friends to carry it on on the profit-sharing system! He was a very good-natured fellow, but shiftless and thoughtless. One evening when he was talking to me in my hut, he calmly told me that he had just left one of his wives—he had four—who was dying of smallpox. The idea of contagion had never entered his head evidently. Of course, his guarding of our camp was nothing but a farce, and he was employed only because it is the custom of the country to hire a watchman from any village at

which you may be stopping, and then, if any of your property is stolen, the community has to make it good to you. Every night Godi slept outside our huts, lying wrapped in his *abba* upon the warm sand; and every night his noisy snores proclaimed how he kept watch. Once or twice, when he had moments of wakefulness, I suppose, he roused us up by firing at robbers who certainly existed in his imagination only. One night I took his weapon away from under him as he slept, and it was not till the next morning that he discovered his loss.

A fortnight after I returned to er-Rigeh, Professor Petrie left the work in my charge for five days, while he went to Ahnas. A week after his return we had to intervene in Ali's domestic affairs. I was hardly surprised, for, while at Bahsamun, he had spoken of his wife as a trial to his patience, and regretted that he had got such "a cheap wife." She appeared a frivolous-minded creature, and was certainly extravagant. On this occasion a brother of hers appeared at the camp, after having been warned off previously, and caused a deal of bother by trying to borrow money from Ali. As he made a great disturbance and became threatening in his manner, Professor Petrie had him seized and carried before the sheikh. The scene that followed was ludicrous. All the natives wished the man to escape, and we had to stand guard over him ourselves. He was supplied with cigarettes by his "judge," and during the taking of evidence he kept emerging from the room in which he was supposed to be confined, and interrupting

the witnesses. Ali gave evidence most reluctantly, and everybody sought to hush the affair up; but Professor Petrie held to his point, and at length the bully was marched off to Bibeh, under a guard of our own men, and there handed over to the police. After several attempts at escape, he was fleeced of most of his belongings, and then was sent back to his home in the Fayoum.

Ali told me after this bother that he was "annoyed" with Fatima for her share in it, and would certainly divorce her as soon as he could find time to do so. He added that he had received reports of "a beautiful and good girl," whom he intended to marry, although her parents wanted a high price for her hand. His regret in parting from Fatima was that if he divorced her she would have the custody of their little girl, Hafeeza, to whom he was very much attached. However, I believe he did eventually carry out his intention. May his new wife prove worth her price!

On the 14th of March Professor Petrie left for Cairo, leaving me to close up the work and pack the antiquities. To make the boxes I got planks from Bibeh and stripped the roofs of our huts. We had a succession of sand-storms just then, and in the roofless buildings I had a highly uncomfortable time of it, but I was too busy all day and too tired at night to care greatly for such things. In the intervals of packing I was called on to photograph the head wife of the sheikh, to give advice to Ali concerning the settlement of his differences with Fatima, and to doctor one or two sick people.

One man who came to me for medicine had been bitten by a dog. He was in a very bad way, and particularly frightened. I learned that the same dog had bitten several other people, and that one had died as the result of his injuries, yet nobody dared kill the brute, because it was a favourite of the sheikh's. I knew the fierceness of the animal very well, having been attacked by it myself, and I determined that he should have no more victims. A word to Godi, who cared nothing for the sheikh's displeasure, was sufficient. That night a shot, followed by a sharp howl, told me that this particular animal would give no more trouble. As for the poor fellow who had been bitten, all I could do was to cauterise the wound; so I told Ali to hold him in conversation while I heated an iron—for I had no caustic. The patient looked on at my operations with interest, evidently believing that I was preparing some sort of a charm. When the iron was almost ready, he asked Ali what I was going to do. "Now," said Ali, with thoughtless candour, "he will burn the places." The man gave a yell, gathered his *ziboon* about him and fled at his best speed, ignoring my entreaties and Ali's commands utterly. Had it not been a serious affair, I could not have kept from laughing over the absurd figure he cut; but I very much fear that the treatment he adopted — dressing the wounds with camel dung—was not calculated to do him much good.

Another day Ali came to me with a report that a corpse was floating down the canal. I found his

story only too true. The body was that of a policeman, and it had evidently been in the water several days. I suspected foul play, and as the sheikh happened to be near at the time, I called his attention to it, and urged him to have it brought ashore and to report the matter at Bibeh. But, for doubtless excellent reasons of his own, the sheikh was not inclined to have any inquiries conducted at his village, and was not anxious to receive visits from officials; so he proved particularly blind, and declared that he could not see any body. When he found it impossible to brazen the matter out that way, he suddenly recollected that he had heard of "a sailor who had fallen overboard from a boat at a village a little way up the canal, the night before." I pointed out that sailors did not wear police uniforms, but he only shrugged his shoulders and declared that it was none of his business. As a matter of fact, the body was that of a policeman who had been killed in a skirmish with salt smugglers, as I subsequently learned; and the sheikh, who was well aware of the fact, was determined not to get entangled in the business in any way. An end was put to the trouble by a dog swimming off from the opposite bank and towing the body into shallow water, upon which I left the spot and sent a messenger to report the matter to the officials at Deshasheh. The man returned saying that he could not find any of the Government officers; and in the meantime the body had been thrust back into the current to resume its grim journey. A mounted police patrol happen-

ing to pass through the village that afternoon I told him of the affair, and when he heard that it was a policeman who had been killed he promised to report it at headquarters; but he afterwards said to the men that it would be "useless to speak about it, since the body had disappeared again." In face of such determined indifference I allowed the subject to drop until I could get word to an English police officer. The incident seems to me to throw a curious light upon the slow way in which the *fellahin* and half-settled Arabs of the outlying districts take hold of new ideas of fair treatment from the Government; for the whole objection to being mixed up in the business was due to a fear that witnesses would suffer in some way for the crime.

Having been invited by Mr. Grenfell and Mr. Hunt to return to Behneseh, as soon as I had settled everything at er-Rigeh, I decided to avail myself of their offer; and wishing to see more of the country along the Bahr Yusuf, I determined to make the journey by boat rather than cross to Bibeh and take train. Ali had obtained my permission to go to the Fayoum, in connection with his domestic affairs, promising to meet me at Gizeh and help in the work of passing the antiquities through the museum; but before he went he hired a boat for me; and at sunrise one day when the wind was favourable, I bade adieu to er-Rigeh and set off southwards once more. The last I saw of our camp on the sandhills was a crowd gathered round the huts, squabbling over the empty tins,

A FARMSTEAD ON THE BAHR YUSUF.

boxes, and bottles which were left behind, conspicuous in the *melée* being the rascally old sheikh, who was personally superintending the removal of the best of the spoil to his own premises.

Our captain had declared positively that we should reach Behneseh in twenty-four hours if we had a favouring wind; but though we had a stiff breeze astern all the first day, we failed to get even within sight of our destination; and it was not until noon of the third day that our journey ended. But although the boat afforded no great comfort, I enjoyed the trip thoroughly. Pretty villages and prosperous farmsteads were dotted along the banks. In a few places the desert swept right down to the west bank of the canal, its yellow sand-dunes contrasting well with the brown-purple of the alluvion, the rich green of the tender grass, and the silver blue of the waters. All along the route, too, were low mounds covered with débris of the Roman period; but I felt that I had done with such things for the time being, and wished only to enjoy the beauties of the scenery; on ground which Professor Petrie had traversed there was small hope of making any discovery, and therefore I would have nothing to do with examining the rubbish-heaps. There was none too much water in the canal, and on the second day we stuck fast on a shoal for about an hour. While we were trying to get off, four boats laden with stone ran on to the same shoal. They endeavoured to rush the difficulty by taking it under full sail, but their manœuvre only stranded them the more effectually; and although

the smallest got away after a great pother, the three others seemed likely to remain fast until a rise took place. As for ourselves, we got over the shallows at length, and after passing through some very pretty bends of the canal, came within sight of the minarets of Behneseh at sunset. Next day I was with my friends again.

The village appeared decidedly smarter and less tumble-down than when I left it, and its people were better dressed and wore a more alert and prosperous air. Nor was this astonishing, for hundreds of pounds had been distributed in wages and *backsheesh* amongst the workmen. The season had been an extraordinarily lucky one for the excavators, who were naturally in high spirits at a success which had so far exceeded their anticipations; and the pile of packing cases in which the precious *wuruq* was stored, ready for transport, was an imposing one. But even the mounds of Oxyrhynchus were not all papyrus; the supply showed symptoms of falling off at last; and as the men were becoming anxious to return to their work in the fields, the digging was rounded off. In the second week in April work was abandoned, the papyri and antiquities were carefully packed, a boat was chartered, and the spoil was carried by camels across to the Nile, and there shipped for Gizeh.

I remained in Cairo to see our finds through the museum, and to repack such of them as were to be brought to England. Mr. Quibell, Professor Petrie's worthy disciple and lieutenant, who had

been at work at el-Kab, very kindly advised me, and helped me in many ways at this period. He also helped me to become better acquainted with Cairo and its sights; and I managed to make a trip to the Fayoum, which interested me greatly. But fascinating though I found both Cairo and Medinet, I must admit that the mark of the tourist was upon them too plainly to please me entirely; and frequently I wished myself back at Behneseh, at Deshasheh, or even at Bahsamun.

VI

THE directing committee in Philadelphia decided that the work at Niffer should be resumed in the autumn of 1898. Mr. Haynes was again appointed superintendent in the field; and as he had married since his return to America, the committee generously consented to Mrs. Haynes accompanying him, making her the guest of the expedition. Mr. Fisher, a young architect of Philadelphia, volunteered his services as assistant, and was accepted; and I was re-engaged. In view of the numerous doubtful points which had cropped up in the course of the previous excavations, it had become apparent that it was very necessary for an expert to visit the site; and it was therefore arranged that Dr. Hilprecht should follow a year later, and that certain portions of the mounds should be cleared against his arrival. For some time he had been chiefly responsible for the scientific direction of the work; but his professorial duties at the Pennsylvania University, and the work of arranging the Semitic section of the Imperial Museum at Constantinople, had prevented his visiting the mounds after the first expedition.

I joined my three companions at Marseilles,

whence we journeyed to Busreh on a cargo steamer in company with a dozen other passengers, some bound for the same port as ourselves, others for Bushire. We touched at Djibouti, Aden, and several ports in the Persian Gulf, and at nearly all of them we made up landing parties and enjoyed a brief run ashore. At Busreh we became the guests of the American Medical Mission, Mr. Cantine and Dr. Worrall both showing us many kindnesses. The town has been compared with Venice by some travellers, with what justice I cannot pretend to say, never having seen the western city; but I imagine that the comparison suggests itself because Busreh stands on a network of canals and creeks and much of its traffic is carried on by *bellums*, which are graceful boats not unlike gondolas in appearance. At high tide a row in a *bellum* up the creek from the river to the bazaars is a pleasant enough experience, but when the water is low there is too much mud, which smells very badly, to be agreeable. The town itself struck us as remarkably clean, and its bazaars are airy and bright, the grain market especially being worth visiting. Its trade is largely in British hands, and an overwhelming proportion of the shipping of the port is British. In 1895 the Messageries Maritimes endeavoured to build up a connection, but failed; and although the Russians have lately run some of their Volunteer boats up to the town, they have been able to do so only by paying an exorbitant subsidy. Of course, it is simply an attempt on their part to create artificial claims in the Gulf, and is on a par

with their policy throughout in regard to that part of the world. The British India mail steamers and other Indian lines provide regular services; the Anglo-Arabian S.S. Co. and Messrs. Bucknill Bros. also have more or less regular sailings; and besides their weekly boats to and from Baghdad, Messrs. Lynch maintain a connection with the Karun. The first time I was at Busreh I noticed three graceful but extremely antiquated gunboats lying in the river flying the Turkish flag, but on my second visit there was only one left. I was told that the others had proved such a nuisance by reason of their knack of breaking away from their moorings and getting into difficulties that they had been put out of commission; and, judging by the appearance of the surviving specimen and the reports that were current concerning her, I should think she would soon follow suit. On the Shatt el-Arab many varieties of native craft are to be seen, *dhows*, *mehalas*, and *buggalows*, and on the mud lies a dredger, which has never been used, after being brought out at great expense, and one or two steam launches in a similar plight. Several British firms have offices and warehouses on the river frontage, where also stands our consulate, and hard by there is a flourishing British club. Our consul at the place was formerly under orders from the Indian Government; but the same steamer that we went out in took out Mr. A. C. Wratislaw, the first consul to be appointed from England, and under orders from London direct.

On the 13th of December our party embarked

on the *Khalifah*, and at five o'clock we started for Baghdad. The river was in a very different state from what it had been when I last saw it; there was no flood, and consequently we made far better progress. At half-past three on the 14th we reached Amarah, and a day later we arrived at Koot; but on the 17th we were forced to stop, by finding a Turkish boat lying across the river, hard and fast on a mud-bank. All day we lay to, taking soundings and trying to find a channel by which we might pass the unfortunate Turk. I took the opportunity to have a run ashore with some of the officers for a little franklin shooting, and was surprised to find the land quite well cultivated. There were plenty of signs of wild pig in the vicinity, but we saw no birds, and had to return empty-handed to the steamer. Next morning, the soundings having proved successful at last, we started early, and, after once sticking rather badly, got safely past the Turkish boat. The shoals are a great nuisance to the steamers, for it often happens that a fresh one forms, in a place where there is supposed to be plenty of water, between the upward and downward trip of the boats; and consequently the navigation of the river is extremely tricky during the summer months, especially on the down-stream trips, when if a boat got stuck she would very likely not get off until the rise of the waters, so fast does the mud shoal up. However, we reached Baghdad without any further mishap, and taking up our quarters in a house which had been engaged for us by Mr. Cree,

immediately commenced preparation for the journey to Niffer.

Unfortunately difficulties with the officials arose at once. Mr. Haynes' right-hand man, Mustapha, was a Turk who was in very bad odour with the police; and as they were anxious to get hold of him, all sorts of objections were thrown in the way of our making a start. The end of the matter was that he had to leave the city in disguise and join his master on the Euphrates. I could never quite make out what all the fuss was about; but, although he seemed to me quite unworthy of so much attention, Mustapha was evidently badly wanted by somebody; he appeared to thrive on petty intrigues, and was a constant source of trouble to the expedition. It was no affair of mine, however, and I did not bother my head with it, as there was plenty to be done in getting our stores and instruments ready for transport. Owing to one cause and another, more than six weeks slipped away before things were in shape for us to start from Baghdad. Then on 21st January I fell ill with typhoid, and had to be left behind at the last moment. Mr. and Mrs. Haynes starting off on the 27th, Mr. Fisher very kindly stayed to nurse me through my illness. I can find no words to express my gratitude for the way in which he performed his self-imposed task. Day and night his care was unremitting, and his patience was unfailing, although I fear I was a somewhat troublesome patient. At the time that I was taken ill there was no English doctor in Baghdad, and nobody knew what was the matter

A DHOW AT BUSREH.

with me. I was first attended by a Turkish doctor, who treated me on veterinary principles. Miraculously surviving his ministrations, I next passed under the care of the dispenser of the British gunboat, who attended me until the arrival of Dr. Sturrock, of the C.M.S., from Busreh. At a time when he himself was suffering from the effects of a recent illness and operation, Dr. Sturrock treated me with a kindness and care for which I can never be sufficiently grateful, and many times after my recovery he proved a very real friend in need.

I was in bed nine weeks, and the fever left me so pulled down that it was out of the question for me to think of going on to Niffer during the summer months. I therefore had to choose between returning to England and facing the summer in Baghdad, where there were at least a few means of combating the heat, and where I could obtain medical advice in case of a relapse. Fearing that if I left the country I might lose my chance of seeing Niffer again altogether, I preferred the latter course. The time that followed was a very anxious one for me, for at first I did not know whether I was to consider my connection with the expedition as terminated or not; but my fears were set at rest by news from Philadelphia and a most kind letter from Dr. Hilprecht, and thereupon I prepared to face the hot season in Baghdad as best I might. At that time misfortune clung to the expedition with painful persistency. Mr. Fisher had become so run down by his work of nursing me that he was compelled to go to Europe to

recuperate. Fortunately the sea voyage did him so much good that he was able to return to Baghdad at the end of the summer; and as I was then fit to travel, we went down to Niffer together at the commencement of the cool season, and remained there until the close of the campaign in the middle of May 1900. At the time that he left for Europe I accompanied him as far as Busreh, and the river air did wonders in picking me up. After a few days' stay at the consulate with Mr. Wratislaw, I returned to Baghdad, where I took up my residence with Mr. Broomhead, and settled down to make the best use I could of my time by learning as much of the people and their language as possible. Thanks to the kindness of my host and the other British residents, I found the time pass very agreeably.

Life in Baghdad for a European is not so bad as might be supposed. Of course, the climate is trying, and there is always the feeling of being out of touch with the civilised world; but there are many compensations, and for my part, I was glad that I had decided to stay on there instead of returning to England. The lack of occupation was the drawback I felt most, but I certainly was not fit for any serious work at the time. Fortunately the summer was less trying than it very often is, and if I made but little progress towards strength, I experienced no serious set back. For amusements I was seldom at a loss. The observation of the native life I always found interesting; then there was the British club, with its library and

billiard-table; and when my anxiety about my position was removed by hearing from America, I bought a horse and had some very fair riding in the desert. I also got a little shooting now and again with one or another of my friends, and excursions to different points of interest helped to pass away the time.

All the European residences are in the same quarter of the city, in the neighbourhood of the consulates, on the left bank of the river and to the south of the bazaars. Houses on the riverside are considered the best, on account of the cool breeze which invariably blows up the water at nights. They have many drawbacks, however; in winter, when the river is high, they are somewhat damp and chilly; and in summer the banks are crowded with open-air coffee-shops and bathing establishments, which cause much noise. In all the houses the ground floor, excepting for the *serdâbs*, is given up to the kitchen, store-rooms, and servants' quarters, which are situated round an open courtyard. The principal rooms are on the first floor and open direct from a covered verandah, which is reached by an open staircase from the courtyard. Shutters and sun-blinds are a *sine quâ non*, and very frequently an entire side of the room is occupied by a screen in which are sliding panels, so that plenty of ventilation can be obtained. The rooms are usually large, and the verandahs afford plenty of space for lounging, and even for dining upon between seasons. Fireplaces are seldom found, coal being extremely dear, but most of the English residents have stoves

in the principal rooms. In the winter the temperature is quite cold enough to make fires a necessity, and everybody lives in the rooms in the usual European fashion. But in summer all that is changed; the first floor is practically deserted; nobody thinks of sleeping anywhere but on the roof; and throughout the day, save for an hour or so in the early morning and late afternoon, one lives in the *serdâb* and on the verandahs.

In most cases a *serdâb* is nothing more than a glorified cellar, although in some of the finer houses it is quite an agreeable place. Sunk below the level of the courtyard, it is reached by a few steps. Everything about it is sacrificed to the one aim of keeping it cool. The walls are extremely thick; the door is nearly always formed of iron bars fitted close together in a strong wooden frame; and in place of glazed windows there are arched openings fitted with similar iron bars. In summer it is usual to have these openings covered with a kind of hurdle thatched with camel-thorn, which is kept moist by means of water dripping upon it from a tank, or by being frequently soused by the servants. The cooling effect of this system is remarkable. Over the doorway is hung a coarse meshed net, which is found the best thing to keep the flies out of a room, being far superior for that purpose to gauze. Under such conditions, it will be understood a *serdâb* is not a bright or cheerful place, looking, in fact, like a compromise between a dungeon and a wild beast's cage. But when the thermometer stands at 120° in the shade—often

as high as 127° for two or three days at a time—one does not care greatly for appearances, being only too glad to get into the cool and have the punkah set going.

One of the great drawbacks to life in the *serdâbs* is that they are often infested with scorpions, especially if the place is old. In Mr. Broomhead's house the *serdâb* was quite new, and we fondly hoped that none of the pests would put in an appearance; but, unhappily for our peace of mind, our hopes proved ill-founded, an energetic pioneer of the tribe making his appearance the first day we occupied the place, to be followed by a numerous and active colony, which we sought in vain to extirpate; and another fond belief of mine, that the creatures did not crawl up the walls, was likewise exploded all too soon. Sometimes snakes and centipedes are found in the *serdâbs* and other parts of the house, but I have never heard of any case of a European being badly bitten or stung by them. In the daytime the greatest inconvenience is experienced from the flies, the common house-fly being the most aggressive and persistent; and at night, especially when there is no breeze, the sand-flies make life wretched. Mosquitoes can be kept away by nets, but the sand-fly defies all attempts to escape from his irritating attentions. The variety of flying insects to be found in the town is simply astonishing. An entomologist might regard the place as a little paradise, for on a still night he would have only to place a light on the roof in order to attract all the specimens

his heart could desire; but an ordinary man objects to having beetles of ferocious appearance crawling over him as he sits reading or chatting, and when fat moths and diminutive flies by the score persist in committing suicide in his soup as he sits at dinner, he usually becomes profane, and prefers to make his meal without a lamp.

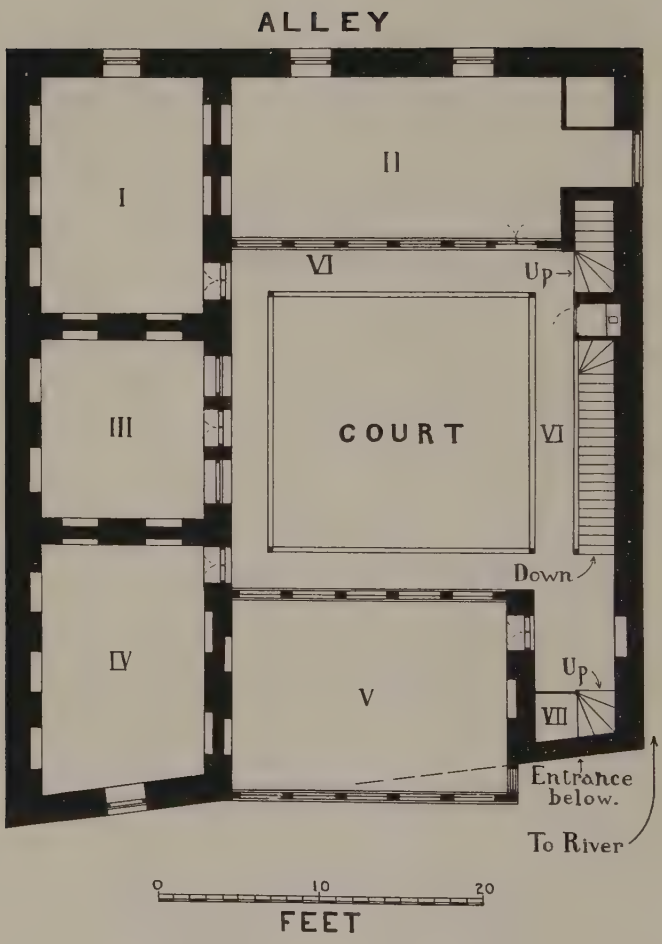
Most Europeans engage Christians as their house servants, finding them more easy to handle than Mohammedans, but the syces are nearly always Mohammedans. On the whole, Goanese seem to be most in request as cooks, and the other servants are generally native Christians from Tel Kaif. Occasionally a Telkaifi will make a very good cook; but too often he takes to drinking heavily, possibly finding the work over a large fire in such a climate too trying to face without stimulants. Indeed, drink seems to be their worst failing; even Shammo fell a victim to arak now and again, although he never quite lost his head, and was always highly ashamed of his lapses; and one very excellent cook, who finally went utterly to the dogs over the craze for drink, was notorious for his mad freaks when he got hold of anything alcoholic. The *farnoosji*, the boy who carries the lamp to light you through the dark streets, is generally a Christian. He usually acts as errand-boy and punkah *wallah* during the day, and after serving a more or less prolonged apprenticeship at this work, he develops into a *sufragi* (table boy), or butler. As a rule, all your servants cheat you; but they take care that nobody else does so, and

in many cases they prove extremely faithful and hard working. Everybody who regards appearances at all, whether he be native or European, always has a *farnoosji* when he goes abroad at night; and, although there are a few oil lamps in most parts of the city, they do not give sufficient light to make it advisable to dispense with the picturesque youngsters; for in winter the roads are full of great puddles and mud-heaps, and in summer scorpions are numerous, not to mention the pariahs and the night-watchmen who lie about promiscuously in the highway.

The British club already referred to is a popular place of gathering in the evenings. It has a very fair billiard-table and a flourishing library; and in the Residency garden below there are good tennis-courts, which are usually thrown open to the members by the kindness of the consul. Besides tennis, the English play golf and cricket; and in the winter months they organise sports. All these amusements take place in the desert, and are usually watched by crowds of the natives. During the time I was in the city, golf was the favourite game, possibly because the ladies could take part in it. The links were some little way out in the desert, and on the days of play a tent was pitched, and tea was provided for the members and their friends, who either cycled, drove, or rode out. The club had several keen players, and some of the native boys have been licked into shape as quite smart caddies. Cricket is played at the same place, on a fairly level stretch of ground, and, of

course, on a pitch of matting. Usually the matches take place when one of the steamers is up, as larger teams can be got together then. Some of the natives make fair fielders, though they show a preference for stopping the ball with their feet, or even with their *ziboons*, rather than with their hands, and at a pinch one or two of them can take a bat to make up a side. Old Shammo especially is a great hand at the game, and to see him running is a sight not to forget. He was also, by the way, a very fair billiard player, having been marker at the old club for many years.

Bicycling is very popular amongst the English, even supplanting riding to a large extent; and many of the natives have taken to the wheel lately. Of course, the roads are very poor, but at some parts of the desert there are level places which are fairly good for riding, and bicycle races are always a feature of the sports. Since I left the place, I believe a few motor bicycles have found their way into the city, despite the prohibition against the importation of such "machinery." Whether the desert will lend itself well to motoring or not, I cannot say; but certainly there should be a good field for motors, for with a motor bicycle it would be an easy matter to go to Hillah or Musseiyib and back in a day. In the summer evenings rowing is a favourite pastime with a few of the English, and there are three or four smart skiffs on the river. Swimming used to be popular, but during the summer I was there several sharks made their appearance, and consequently bathing



PRINCIPAL FLOOR OF A HOUSE IN BAGHDAD.

I. Bedroom (Serdab below). II. "Harem" (Kitchen below). III. Dining Room, (Lobby below). IV. Bedroom, and V. Guest Room (Stores below both). VI. Balcony. VII. Small Closet.

was considered unsafe. A very usual evening's amusement was to take a *goupha* down the river, and go for a walk through the fields and palm gardens, which are very pretty, upon the right bank especially. Picnics, large and small, were also given in the neighbouring gardens, and were an enjoyable way of spending an evening, when the larger ones usually took place. But a few bachelors used to go off in the mornings also, sometimes to one place, sometimes to another, and have their breakfast *al fresco.*

During the heat of the day nobody cared to go out; the office work was carried on in the *serdâbs*; and it was customary for Europeans to have their tiffin taken to them at the office by the servants, rather than face the streets at noon. Owing to the early hour of rising, nearly everybody slept for at least an hour after tiffin, and it was only in the fresh hours of the morning and the cool of evening that we really seemed alive. Yet I was assured that the summer was an unusually favourable one, and I must admit that the nights, with few exceptions, were truly splendid. Especially when the moon was up did I enjoy the life on the roof, which is a thing that must be experienced to be understood and appreciated.

VII

TO readers of the *Arabian Nights* the mention of Baghdad surely conjures up pictures of splendid palaces and imposing buildings of all kinds set in beautiful gardens; but the real thing is very different; and although it is the chief city of Irak, it has remarkably few fine buildings. Its fascination lies largely in its associations with the past; there is an old-world air about its streets and alleys which is lacking in many finer cities; and it actually owes much of its charm and picturesqueness to the decay of its ancient grandeur, which has left many pathetic reminders scattered in different buildings and bazaars. Here and there, in some of the older mosques and *khans* especially, one sees really splendid specimens of tile-work and beautiful inscriptions in the highly decorative style of Arabic writing; and frequently, in some forsaken alley, you come across examples of wonderfully intricate carving in wood or stone, in doors and doorways. Then, too, the place has all the fascination of mystery. The alleys are shut in by dead walls, and very rarely do you get even a passing glance at the native life behind the barriers. When you do get a glimpse of a court-

yard through an open doorway, you generally feel as though you had seen a bit of some other world, or had been whisked back through three or four centuries. The Turk and Arab still seek to exclude prying Western curiosity from their homes; and, in my humble opinion, they do well. An Eastern woman veiled is frequently charming; unveil her, and the spell is broken. And so, too, would it be with the native life of Baghdad, I fancy.

Around the city the old walls crumbling to decay remind you again of the past, when Baghdad flourished under the magnificent Haroun, and was "the centre of beauty, culture, and arts." In places these walls still bear traces of beautiful tile-work. Zobeide's tomb also stands to show what the builders of the palmy days could do; but it is a sad wreck now, and only two or three very small pieces of decorated tiles remain to suggest what it was like when built. Its stairway is broken away so badly that it requires an active climber to ascend it, but from the flat roof whence the strangely-shaped dome springs, you can obtain an interesting view of parts of the city and across the surrounding plain.

At present Baghdad makes no effort to be imposing. Its people are too engrossed in endeavouring to get enough to live upon to care for building mosques or great houses, and the struggle for bare existence is bitterly keen. For the city has lost much of its importance since Persia took to trading direct through the Gulf ports and Trebizond; and until the railway reaches

it, there seems slight chance of matters being improved. At present most of its trade is done through the Tigris and Busreh; but much of its revenue is derived from the pilgrim traffic; and it has been said that more than half its inhabitants live on their wits at the expense of the Persian and Indian pilgrims.

Divided into two sections by the Tigris, which is spanned only by a bridge of boats, Baghdad is more like two cities than one, so marked is the difference between the part on the right bank and that on the left. On the latter side are the *serai*, barracks, custom-house, and other Government buildings, all the European consulates and houses of business, the chief bazaars, and most of the Christian and Jewish houses. On the right bank the *Shiahs* muster strongly, and here are many *khans* patronised by Persian pilgrims and travellers, large granaries and grain markets, the Persian consulate, and some fine modern houses belonging to wealthy Turks, officials and others. There is also on this side of the river a tram line to the mosque of Kazimaim. I only once travelled on these trams. The permanent way is surely the most extraordinary thing of its kind in the world, on account of its ups and downs and the failure of the different lengths of line to join properly; and the rolling-stock is equally extraordinary. But it is well worth the half-hour's jolting which the car gives you, to see the beautiful mosque with its four gold-capped minarets and exquisite tile-work.

Another interesting excursion is that to Ctesiphon, whose ruins lie on the left bank of the river, about four hours south of Baghdad. The famous arch of the great hall is over a hundred feet in height, and the adventurous spirits who take pleasure in such things are very proud of telling you how they climbed to its crown. I never visited the ruins, although I fully intended to do so before leaving Baghdad, but I had a good view of them several times from the river. Opposite them are the mounds of Seleucia, equally famous in their own way. Both sites have been plundered by the Arabs, who make use of the fine bricks for their own building operations. It seems a pity that they are not thoroughly and scientifically explored before the mischief goes any further. That they would pay for excavating I have no doubt, for the antiquity dealers report that the Arab grubbers have found gold coins and ornaments in good quantities, and on one occasion a large jar full of early Arabic coins was discovered by a lucky digger. In connection with Ctesiphon, Dr. Peters writes (in *Nippur*, vol. i. p. 198): "Most representations of this palace of Chosroes restore a building on the other side of the reception hall . . . but, although I examined the mound carefully, I found no present evidence of the former existence of a building on the south side . . ." etc. Be that as it may, such a building certainly did exist, as many residents in Baghdad could have informed Dr. Peters had he asked them; and I myself have seen photographs show-

ing it, which, I was told, were taken only a few years before he made his careful examination; so that it is difficult to understand how all traces of such a huge wall could have disappeared in such a short time.

To return to Baghdad. The custom-house and bazaars are the centre of the city's activity. A noteworthy feature at the former is the number of Kurds who are employed as *hamals*. Their dress is different from that of the Baghdadis; in place of the turban-wound fez or *arackcheen*, they wear a cauldron-shaped hat made of a coarse felt-like material, usually dark brown or black; and generally in place of the *abba* they have a quilted coat. In carrying their loads they use a rope or band made of hair, which they pass round the bale and across their foreheads, thus taking much of the weight upon their necks; and they are in no way inferior to the famous *hamals* of Constantinople in the matter of strength, trotting along with an enormous bale of tightly-packed wool as if it were a mere featherweight. They are inclined to be clannish, and do not mix freely with the Baghdadis; and their great aim in life appears to be to save enough money to return to their beloved mountain homes; but from the little I saw of them they seemed to be intelligent and peaceably disposed. The clerks at the custom-house are, like their fellows throughout Turkey, open to bribery, but we found them very civil and obliging and by no means extortionate, which is more than I can say for the Regie officials.

One amiable customs' clerk, on the occasion of my first arrival at Baghdad, passed through quite a score of "prayer-books" (which are allowed into the country without examination), observing smilingly that I should want them immediately. Good man, he would not listen to my explanations that the volumes were not prayer-books; and, after I saw the books which had to pass the censor's dirty hands, I felt most grateful to my smiling instructor in official routine.

The bazaars were a never-failing source of interest to me, as they offered such splendid opportunities for observing the native life of the city. Although not so fine as those of many Eastern towns, they are well built, and possess the additional charm of being particularly free from modern improvements. Each trade has its own quarter, where the merchants sit in their little shops, carrying on their business in the delightfully Oriental way, never hurrying themselves, but taking the keenest interest in a bargain —their own or another's—and often spending hours over an argument about a few paras. In the same spirit of bargaining a *dalal* will expend as much breath in crying the beauties of an aged donkey as he will in praising the points of a fine horse, and will be as energetic in trying to sell a cheap *abba* as he will in selling a fine rug. A *sarraf*, too, will haggle over a few coppers as vehemently as he will over changing five liras for silver. For the Baghdadi dearly loves to get the best of a bargain, and it really seems as

if he would rather make a piastre by haggling than earn a *mejideh* as a legitimate profit.

Of course, the roadway is covered with a vaulted roof, and it is lined with rows of stalls which remind one of a series of miniature railway arches. These stalls are raised a little above the roadway, and are innocent of "shop-fronts"; at night they are closed with strong wooden shutters, which are secured by clumsy padlocks or clumsier wooden locks; and in front of many of them stand large nail-studded chests, in which the merchants keep part of their stock. The roadway itself is full of ruts and holes, and in wet weather the pedestrian must be wary and prepared to dodge to a safe and dry spot when a string of pack animals comes jingling down the road, scattering the pariahs in all directions, and drawing curses from the *hamals* who are plodding along bent up beneath their heavy loads. Strings of supercilious camels sway through the narrow street, their loads sweeping a clear way for them as they pass along grunting; and donkeys going at a gallop, or *kadeeshes* bearing dripping water-skins, cause you to be constantly alert if you wish to avoid a mud bath. The crowd of sight-seers and promenaders includes Persians and Indians, who are on their pilgrimage; Turkish soldiery in all sorts of uniforms, or no uniforms to speak of; hectoring *zaptiehs*, who endeavour to clear a way for themselves with threats and blows; turbaned priests and mullahs of Islam; black-robed priests of the Greek and Armenian churches; brown-frocked friars and monks; desert Arabs, openly agape at the

THE BRIDGE OF BOATS AT BAGHDAD.

wonders of the "great city," yet striving to appear unmoved; patent-leather booted officers in gorgeous array; ragged beggars and half-naked children; and veiled ladies, either afoot or perched on a mule or donkey, bent upon shopping, or bound for the baths, attended by their servants and, perhaps, if they be *grandes dames*, by a black eunuch or two. Over the whole floats an odour, indescribable but undeniable; and you are deafened by the babel of many tongues, the grunting of camels, the neighing of horses, and the sharp yelping and snarling of the pariahs. At favourable points are posted the sellers of bread, cakes, sweetmeats, *kebobs*, fruit, and such-like wares, who spread their goods on mats or in baskets and trays by the roadside and squat beside them, loudly calling on passers-by to purchase, and varying their recommendations of their own merchandise with chaffing remarks about those of their rivals, and with warning cries to riders and pedestrians not to trample on their baskets. Seated in a quiet nook a public scribe plies his calling, or waits for clients to come to him. A horse-dealer parades a showy stallion before the eyes of a likely purchaser, making him curvet and rear in fine style. And brokers buttonhole anybody whom they think likely to purchase the particular wares that they have to dispose of.

One of the most interesting parts of the bazaars is the quarter of the coppersmiths. Each stall has its little fire going, and the clanging of the hammers is musical enough, although it is easy to have too much of it. The workers are most skilful in turning

out the large cooking-cauldrons, water-pots, kettles, frying-pans, ladles, and coffee-pots, which they hammer out from the sheets of metal on small anvils. In the bazaar of the lamp-makers you get a good idea of the thriftiness of the people in some ways, and their method of using up every scrap of material. The framework of most of the lamps is made from old cans in which oil has been imported from Batoum ; and no piece of glass, however small, is thrown away. Here lamps of all sorts, shapes, and sizes are manufactured, some of the more expensive ones being gorgeous in their array of coloured glass, and you can buy them at almost any price. And here, too, it is that your *farnoosji* brings the lamp for repairs whenever it gets broken.

The bazaar of the silversmiths and goldsmiths is another fascinating spot. Entered through a narrow doorway and short alley, it is well placed for defence in case of any rioting or disturbance. The bazaar consists of a series of very small arched recesses situated round the sides of an oblong enclosure, and faced by a similar series placed back to back in the centre of the oblong. Between the two rows runs a narrow pathway, which is uncovered. As this path gets most of the drippings from the roof of the stalls, as well as any rain which falls direct upon it, and as the bazaar is not provided with any system of drainage or sanitation, it is usually in a most unpleasant state in the wet season. But the place is always worth a visit. The workers are most ingenious, performing highly minute work with very clumsy instruments and

appliances, and the rapidity with which they will make a chain or a ring is astonishing. The Baghdad jeweller, however, makes no display of his goods. It would probably be unsafe for him to do so. He keeps them in small boxes and cabinets, which can be readily carried to a place of safety at need; and he exhibits a reluctance to show you his wares at his place of business, preferring to bring them to your house, where no busybodies can see just how much he has.

The shoemakers and saddlers make a brave show with their array of red, yellow, purple, and green leather goods. The leather used for the native slippers is generally remarkably good in its wearing properties; but the turned-up toes are always a source of trouble to an Englishman at first, especially in the Baghdad type of slipper, which has a very curved sole. In Aleppo the soles are made flatter and thinner, and for house wear the Aleppo slipper is very comfortable. Of late years the progressive spirits of Baghdad have favoured patent-leather, usually preferring spring-side boots or shoes as being easy to remove when entering a house or mosque; and the amount of trashy goods of this class with which the stalls are stocked is evidence of the popularity of cheap European articles, although the native ones are far more durable, and therefore really cheaper in the long-run. Cheap brown boots and shoes are growing popular, especially amongst the Jews and Christians. The strangest things in the way of footwear that I noticed in Baghdad were some high

boots with silk tassels, which are worn by ladies. They are certainly showy, being usually a bright lemon or red colour, with blue or red tassels, but they are so large and loose that I should think they must be uncomfortable to wear.

The cloth and silk merchants' shops are very numerous, for the Baghdadi is fond of dress, and, as he likes bright colours, these stalls usually present a rainbow-like appearance. Some of the most beautiful and costly silks used in the making of *ziboons* are imported from Egypt, while from Syria come filmy silk *abbas* and delicate *kefiyehs*. The enterprising Japanese have obtained a footing for some of their goods too, for I often noticed remarkably cheap silks bearing their trade marks. Unfortunately cheap and trashy European goods are imported in large quantities; and heedless of their inferiority in point both of design and wearing qualities to the native articles, the short-sighted Arab too often rushes to buy Manchester cotton *kefiyehs* instead of Damascus silk ones, just as he buys brown-paper French and German boots rather than Baghdad slippers. And it is almost impossible to buy a fez except of Austrian make, while the market is flooded with cheap glass and china ware from the same source.

It is distressing to see how native credulity is imposed upon, and how, too often, the European firms lend themselves to trickery. As an example of the sort of thing that goes on, I may quote an instance which I have elsewhere put forward,[1]

[1] In an article in *Chambers's Journal*, Feb. 1897.

merely adding that it is by no means an isolated case: "A certain well-known firm in Sheffield has long supplied the Baghdad market with cutlery of sterling quality, which has won for itself quite a name among the Arabs, who invariably look for this firm's trade mark on anything of the kind, and refuse to take other goods. Now . . . German firms . . . are sending out inferior goods, stamped with an imitation of the English firm's trade mark." Such sharp practice upon the unsophisticated Arab is downright disgraceful, for the reputation of the British firm is bound to suffer, and the Arab would find it hard to believe that a Frank would descend to such trickery. The worst part of the business is that it would be a very difficult and costly matter to bring the offence home, so that the swindlers not only go scot-free, but are reaping large profits from their dishonest practice, while undermining the British firm's reputation.

The unequal struggle between East and West goes on fiercely in every branch of trade in the bazaars; and if it were not pitiful to see the arts and crafts of the old land being stifled by the inrush of Western shoddy, one would have to smile at many of the things one sees. What, for instance, could be more out of place than the sight of an old Baghdadi right out of the pages of the *Arabian Nights* gravely working a cheap European sewing-machine, while over his head hangs a "West End Fashion Plate"? At every turn you may see the old and the new side by side in the streets. I well remember that every Friday morning there used

to pass our house a couple who might be regarded as typical of the vanishing and the coming order. They were evidently father and son. The father, a dignified patriarch with a fine white beard and a very kindly expression, always wore the flowing robes of an Arab gentleman, spotlessly clean and carefully arranged. The son, who was a "superior creature," indulged in very loud check suits, shirts of a gorgeousness only surpassed by that of his neckties, high collars, patent-leather boots, and white or red socks. It must have been a sore point with him that he was not able to don a silk hat, or at the least a bowler! His clothes, naturally, were ill-fitting and put on in a most slovenly way, the outrageous tie especially showing an inclination to work its way either to the back of his neck or else down to his boots. I always pitied the father. He must have felt like a swan whose cygnet tried to turn itself into an ugly duckling—and succeeded.

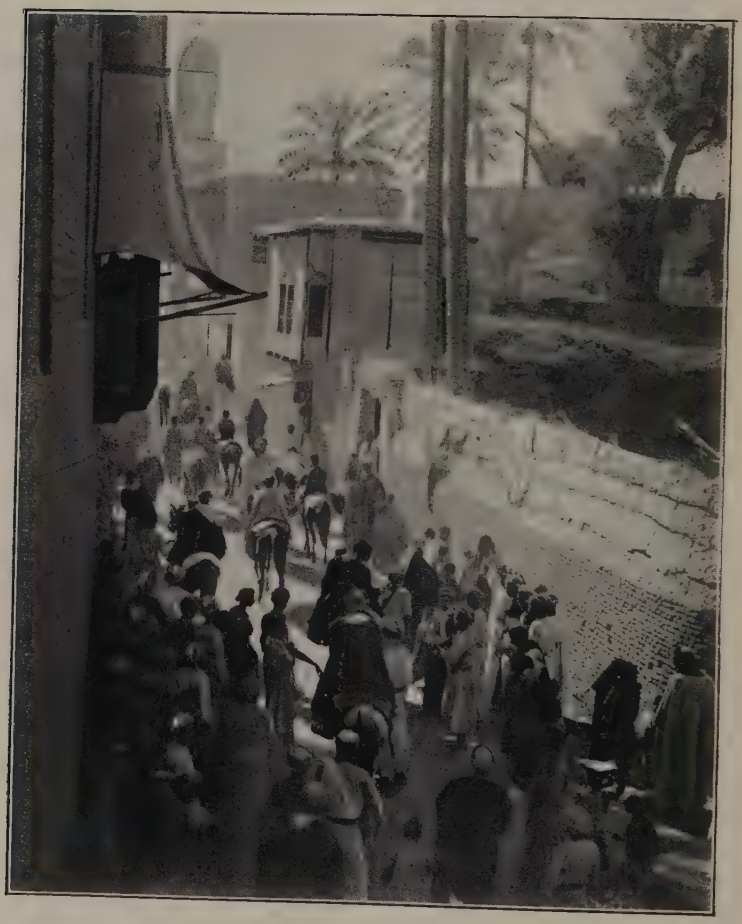
A good place to see the native is at one of the coffee-shops, where he loves to sit and chat with his friends and acquaintances. There are many of these places of entertainment in all parts of Baghdad. In the winter those in or near the bazaars are most patronised, but in the summer months the ones in the suburbs or on the river bank are largely resorted to. At the latter, benches are placed in the open air, along the streets or on the river's bank, as the case may be; and a popular house will often have two or three hundred customers at a time on a fine evening. The coffee

served is usually excellent, and the price moderate. Tea and sherbets can generally be obtained, but eatables are rarely to be had except from pedlars, who passing amongst the pleasure makers, with their baskets or trays on their heads, drive a brisk business. Even the sellers of lemonade are often permitted by the proprietors of the coffee-shops to solicit custom from the people who are using the benches, although one would fancy that such a proceeding would interfere with their own business. The coffee-shops are the points where strolling musicians, dancers, and jugglers reap their best harvest; and once when a travelling British circus appeared in the city, it hired one of the favourite houses for its performance. I frequently watched troupes of dancers giving their performances at a popular summer resort, but as I shall have occasion to speak of Arab dances later on, I need not describe them now.

From Mr. Broomhead's house I used to watch the passers-by for hours at a time without tiring, for there was nearly always something interesting to be seen. The fakirs who trudged along with all their worldly possessions carried in a bundle slung over their backs, the street urchins playing at hockey or tip-cat, the fearful and wonderful professional beggars who would stay outside the house for hours at a time whining for alms, and the scarcely less fearful pariah dogs were all amusing in their way. Like the street packs of Constantinople, the Baghdad pariahs have their recognised districts, and woe betide the rash animal

who should venture into the domains of a rival pack! He would immediately become the object of a combined attack by the lawful canine patrol, and his only chance of safety seemed to be to throw himself on his back and wave his legs in the air, as if to say, "I surrender, and won't do it again, really." Thereupon he would be allowed to retreat to his own quarter, assisted by bites and snaps from his enemies; but as soon as he crossed the boundary, he would turn fiercely on his assailants, and his friends would come to his assistance. There was a deal of character in these pariahs, and considering the hard struggle they had for existence some of them were not bad specimens of dogs. One old fellow in particular, who had been well fed by Mr. Clark, and had consequently grown up a very strong and fine dog, was quite a celebrity in his way. All the English colony knew him and used to feed him, and in return for this kind treatment he used always to follow an Englishman when he saw one, and to drive all other pariahs away; for he was a famous fighter, and his powers were recognised by his fellows, who permitted him to pass through their territories unmolested.

The Baghdadi has not a large field to choose from in the way of recreation. On his day of rest —Friday for the Mohammedan, Saturday for the Jew, Sunday for the Christian—he usually takes a walk in the city, or rides out to the gardens, with his friends or family, after he has attended his place of worship. A visit to the baths or a social call is his only other relaxation as a rule, excepting at



A PROCESSION (AT A CIRCUMCISION), BAGHDAD.

such special times as a wedding feast; but in the summer evenings he loves to "make *kaif*" (*i.e.* to lounge, eat sweetmeats, smoke, drink, and chatter with his friends) beside the river. Then are the banks crowded with tents and temporary huts, and hundreds of families make a more or less prolonged picnic at favourite spots on the riverside.

The Christians, whether they belong to the Telkaif colony or the Roman Catholic body, all live in one quarter of the town, hard by the Jewish colony, and in the neighbourhood of their particular churches. They are treated with great toleration, certainly have little to complain of, and seem well contented with their lot. The Jews are in much the same position, and many of them are very wealthy. Some of the Jewish and Christian women are remarkably pretty, and on festival days they turn out in most beautiful *izzars*, making the streets look like brilliant flower gardens. Of course, one seldom sees a Mohammedan lady unveiled, so that I can say nothing of their personal charms; but as a rule their dress, although frequently of rich material, is less bright in colouring than that of their "unbelieving" sisters.

Mr. Broomhead's house stood opposite to a very popular mosque, Seyyid Sultan Ali, and as we could see into the open courtyard from our roof, I was able to gather an idea of the services, while from the window of one of the rooms it was possible to see into the parlour where the priests received their visitors. At times we found the proximity of the mosque somewhat of a nuisance, for when the

muezzin ascended the minaret to give the call to prayers, he seemed to be in our own house, so close were the two buildings; and although he had a highly musical voice, we hardly appreciated it when he roused us from our morning snooze on the roof. But I fancy the priests and worshippers objected to our seeing them also, though they never made any complaint even when they were aware that we watched them. The mosque was entered through an arched gateway, over which the priests' parlour was built, and on the opposite side of the court from the entrance stood a lofty arcading capped with domes of brickwork, some plastered and some inlaid with glazed bricks and tiles. The minaret stood at the angle of the building, which was separated from our house only by a very narrow alley, and was a graceful structure with a lot of pretty glazed bricks set in a pattern over it. The *zikrs* were held in the court in the evenings, and on important occasions the whole building was brilliantly illuminated by means of dozens of *farnooses* and fairy lamps, which were suspended on strings across the court and over the surfaces of the building. At such times the place was thronged with all sorts and conditions of men, officers, priests, and beggars, who stood in a circle, joining hands and chanting the name of Allah times innumerable, while they swayed and rocked their bodies to and fro in unison. Whenever a performer became tired, he dropped out of the circle and a fresh one took his place, the *zikr* frequently lasting four or five hours. The mosque was a modern building,

and belonged to the Sunnis. Its priests seemed to me genuinely worthy of respect, for they treated rich and poor alike with real courtesy, and were liberal in their almsgiving. One notable character who frequented the place was a wild-looking Afghan, who was reported to be fanatical to the point of absolute madness, and to have an unpleasant way of running amuck. He certainly was an extraordinary individual in appearance and manner, tall and powerfully built, with piercing black eyes, an eagle nose, and flowing black locks; and he used to ride in the most reckless fashion, going full tilt through the narrow streets, tearing round the corners, and yet always avoiding collisions in a wonderful way. Once or twice I had narrow escapes from being knocked down by him, when he always seemed to think it a great joke to pull up his horse on its haunches with a jerk; and afterwards he took to saluting me with great politeness whenever he saw me.

During my stay in the place I came to know many other interesting characters by sight; and, in fact, I found the city and its people full of fascination. It is impossible to convey its charm by description; but it certainly deserves to be known better, and it would well repay the trouble of getting there for anybody who was tired of the better known parts of the near East. Of course, when the railway is constructed, it will be more accessible, but most likely it will then become so modernised that much of its charm will disappear. At present it is the kind of place in

which anything might happen. You find it easy to believe in the *jann* and magicians of the old stories when you walk round the place; and as for the natives, they do firmly believe in such things still, and will tell you of seeing a *jinnee* as naturally as they will tell you of seeing a camel, if once they learn that you will not laugh at them. They still possess many of the characteristics that we read of in the *Arabian Nights*, as the following story may serve to show. In fact, it might very well figure in the *Nights*, but, as a matter of fact, the incident with which it deals occurred while I was at Niffer, and I was told of it by a *zaptieh*.

A certain *gouphagi* was plying his calling on the river when, as he thrust his paddle against the bank, he knocked away a quantity of earth which had become loosened by the scouring of the waters; and the fall of the earth exposed a large earthenware jar, which had been buried beneath the bank. The sight of this jar naturally aroused the curiosity of the *gouphagi*, and he instantly set to work to clear it of the surrounding soil, digging with his paddle and scraping the loose earth away with his hands. In a very short time he laid bare the jar, when he saw that it was sealed; and upon seeking to move it he found it extremely heavy, and his ear caught the sound of chinking metal. With beating heart he broke the seal upon the vessel and removed its cover, utterly ignoring the risk he ran in so doing of setting free an enraged *jinnee*, as the poor fisherman did in the story of the *Nights*. For-

tunately for him, no immediate misfortune befell him as the result of his rashness. On the contrary, he could scarce contain himself for joy at the sight which met his gaze. The jar was full to the brim of shining gold coins! The amount was variously reported, some narrators declaring it to be three thousand pieces, while others put it as high as thirty thousand. Except the *gouphagi*, nobody knew for certain; and nobody ever will know now, for reasons which will soon become apparent. At any rate, it was a rich haul, and its lucky finder hastened to get it into his *goupha*, where he concealed it by throwing his cloak over it. Afterwards he carried it off, determined to keep the lot for himself and not to tell anybody of the find.

Now this determination, although a very natural one, was undoubtedly wrong; for by the laws of the country everything a certain distance below the surface of the earth belongs to the Sultan. It may be remarked also that the said Sultan lays claim to the very air at a certain distance above the ground, and that therefore any of his subjects who wish to build an extra high house must first obtain his permission to do so. But this is by the way. The point to bear in mind is that the treasure found by the *gouphagi* should, according to the law, have been handed over by him without delay to the Sultan's local representative, who would doubtless have forwarded it to his august master—after deducting working expenses. The bold Arab, however, did nothing

of the sort. He decided that findings mean keepings, and, acting accordingly, managed to get the gold to his own humble dwelling in safety.

But somehow news of his haul reached the ears of the powers that be at Baghdad, who promptly sent *zaptiehs* to investigate the affair. This investigation, conducted with the aid of the bastinado, resulted in the discovery of a *cache* beneath the mud floor of the *gouphagi's* hut. The gold was declared "crown property." A zealous official of the Department of Antiquities who happened to be in Baghdad at the time, hearing that the coins were all ancient, claimed them on behalf of his Department. Other highly placed personages evinced great anxiety to examine the find also; but B—— Bey knew how to carry his point, being a very much shrewder man than the simple *gouphagi*, and the precious coins were passed to his hands for investigation. I had met this worthy gentleman and heard much about him, and I was not at all surprised to hear how keenly he was interested in the matter. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that everybody looked for his report with a deal of curiosity. He announced that the coins belonged mostly to the time of Haroun er-Rashid and his successor, but declared that the amount of treasure had been greatly exaggerated, and that instead of thousands there were only hundreds of coins. He handed them over to another high official for shipment to Constantinople, and—well, there all my informants stopped in the story. Some smiled sug-

gestively, some shrugged their shoulders, and some spoke of sticky palms. My *zaptieh* friend observed that "Allah knew the truth of the matter," and added that he expected I should have little difficulty in buying a gold coin of Haroun er-Rashid in Baghdad if I wished to do so. He was right.

It is an unsatisfactory end to the narrative. But I set out to tell the plain unvarnished truth; and although I have often asked myself numerous questions concerning the coins, I have never reached any satisfactory conclusion about them.

VIII

AS a rule, the hiring of a caravan is a vexatious matter, for of all hagglers muleteers would be hard to beat for sheer contrariness. It seems to be a point of honour with them to represent the route over which you wish to travel as the worst in the country, and even when they have finally contracted with you to provide, at a certain rate, the number of animals you require, your difficulties are by no means over. After one or two experiences you learn that it is hopeless to expect to get away at the specified hour, even if you are fortunate enough to do so on the day agreed upon; and at the last moment you are commonly pestered to take—and pay for—an extra animal or two. All this may be due to a variety of reasons. Sometimes, more especially when it is known in the bazaars that they are under contract, the muleteers experience real difficulty in buying provender at a fair price; sometimes they have not as many animals as are necessary, and must therefore buy or hire from their fellows under such disadvantageous circumstances as entail protracted negotiations; and very often they seek to postpone the departure in order to

be able to travel in company with another caravan which is expected to leave shortly after the date fixed upon for your departure.

This sort of thing is apt to give you a bad impression of the class. But it must be admitted that they have an unusually hard lot, and generally earn their money well. They treat their poor animals abominably, though they are careful not to do anything which might injure them so as to depreciate their market value; but their charges are usually obstinate brutes on which kindness would be wasted even if they tried it; and if they work their beasts hard, they work themselves quite as hard, if not harder. They commence the work of loading up the goods before you think of stirring in the morning, and it is a task that requires a good deal of discrimination if the loads are not to be constantly slipping off during the day's march. Every evening, when the camping-ground or *khan* is reached, they must take off the loads again, feed, water, picket, and rub down the refractory mules and *kadeeshes*, and then prepare their own meal. While on the march they must keep the animals from fighting and from wandering off the track, and must be continually on the look-out to prevent the packs from shifting. And through the greater part of the journey they must tramp on foot; for, although each muleteer has a donkey, as a rule he uses it only for carrying his scanty baggage, the cooking pots, and a number of nose-bags. When he does ride the poor little beast, he sits prodding it incessantly with a stout

needle or a pointed stick, so that its rump is in a disgustingly raw state; but, as I say, he rides very little as a rule, being too much occupied in attending to the pack animals. Very often he must keep watch at night to prevent other muleteers from stealing his animals, their food, or their harness. And all this on the poorest and coarsest fare and in all sorts of weather, grilling heat, blinding dust- and sand-storms, and soaking rains, against which his poor clothing affords particularly scant protection. No wonder the *munkari* is a cross-grained fellow. His haggles with the *khanchi* over the price of fodder and the rights of drawing water would sour the temper of a saint. And, finally, it is very probable that his employer's idiosyncrasies (especially when said employer is an eccentric Englishman, who objects to the animals being beaten too severely) annoy him quite as much as his annoy the employer.

At Baghdad the intending traveller usually has a good choice of muleteers to select from, and can consequently drive a better bargain than he could do at a smaller town, for there are many caravans constantly arriving from Aleppo, Damascus, and Smyrna, to say nothing of those from Persia. The rates of hiring vary according to the season, the state of the roads, and the number of animals required. Usually a portion of the payment is made in advance, when the contract is signed, something on account is given on the way, and a part is kept back until the completion of the journey, in order to give the employer a hold over

the *munkari*, without which he would be pretty well helpless. On a long journey it is very advisable to provide yourself with one or two tents, even when you are going over a route where the *khans* are fairly good; and a trustworthy servant, who can do what little cooking you require, is a great blessing, if not an absolute necessity. Of course, if you place yourself in the hands of a dragoman, you save yourself a certain amount of trouble and worry; but it is an expensive way to travel, and my own opinion is that a dragoman of the true "tourist type" is an unspeakable nuisance. The genus is practically unknown at Baghdad—fortunately for Baghdad; but Shammo has served many travellers, and is well worth his money. While I was laid up there, a young Englishman arrived in the city, travelling under the sheltering wing of a spick-and-span dragoman provided by a well-known agency. He had with him a comfortable two-wheeled cart, and was taking round a solid silver tea-service! Naturally he paid outrageous prices for everything, and it was a method of travelling which very few people would care to indulge in. Usually one is prepared to dispense with all the luxuries and many of the comforts of civilisation on a caravan journey. The baggage is cut down as much as possible; your wardrobe is all packed in one or two trunks, which are all that you require to open; and you expect to let the bulk of it remain untouched, excepting at such places as you stop at for a day or two, until the journey's end.

It is the custom of the country to take a *zaptieh* with you, changing him for a fresh one at each stage of the journey. He is provided by the Government, but you pay him, at the rate of a shilling or two each day. He is more ornamental than useful, generally; but if you dispense with his services, the Government declines to take any responsibility for your safety, and does its best to throw obstacles in your way at every turn; so that, upon the whole, it is advisable to conform to the rule; and sometimes your *zaptieh* turns out an entertaining companion, and a very handy and obliging fellow to boot. Finally, it is needful to have your passport, and to provide yourself with a *teskereh*, which you may be called upon to produce at different stages of the journey. This done, you may set off with a reasonable prospect of reaching your destination safely, after a more or less interesting experience. Whether you will find that experience enjoyable or the reverse depends largely upon yourself. Despite all its drawbacks, I must admit that personally I thoroughly enjoy caravan travel.

The little trip from Baghdad to Hillah is a good introduction to the work, being just long enough to show you what it is, and not sufficient to tire you unduly. Once across the river and through the bazaars upon the west bank, it takes you very little time to get clear of Baghdad. Half an hour's easy riding brings you to the Ker Bridge, and there you find yourself upon the Hillah road. Here it is that your caravan gets

sorted out from the crowd of beasts and cattle which has thronged the embankment along which you have ridden from the city; and you are able to see what sort of beasts the *munkari* has provided, and to make sure that all your baggage has been brought along. One thing is quite certain: you are sure to have at least one lame beast in the caravan, and in all probability you will observe that he has one of the heaviest loads. You must not object at this stage, however, for the muleteers are likely to be at their worst now, not having had time to get used to the particular baggage that they have been called upon to balance in loads, and being consequently in a state of exasperation with everybody and everything. Later on, you may call the head-man aside, and speak firmly to him, and by a hint of *backsheesh*, you may succeed in lightening the lame animal's lot somewhat.

The "road," of course, is nothing but a track worn by the passing of countless caravans, and marked here and there by the ruts made by *arabanah* wheels. The plain it crosses is uninteresting, flat, and sad-coloured; in summer insufferably hot, and swarming with stinging flies, which drive animals and riders almost mad; and in winter converted into a sea of mud by the rains and floods. The chief breaks in its level monotony are offered by the ruins of deserted *khans*, and by low mounds and embankments that stand for dead houses, towns, and canals. In places you may see patches of cultivated land, and here and

there a wild flower struggles for existence; but much more common sights are the skeletons and carcases of caravan animals, which are scattered thickly all along the route. Now and again you catch sight of a jackal, a boar, or a hyæna scurrying across the plain, and overhead vultures and hawks poise and wheel. At wide intervals you may see the tents of some small camp of Arabs, pitched wherever there is pasturage for their flocks; or, if you are in luck, you may chance upon a band of the Shammar on the move, in search of fresh camping-grounds; but, as a rule, you have little to interest you beyond the meeting and passing of other caravans.

The introduction of a service of *arabanahs* between Baghdad and Hillah, and Baghdad and Musseiyib, has done much to alter the style of travel. An *arabanah* is a very primitive affair, like an oblong box on wheels, covered with a wooden roof, which is supported on slender uprights. Along the sides of the conveyance, hanging from the roof, are curtains which are intended to afford shelter from the sun's rays; but as they are generally of thin cotton material, they fulfil that purpose indifferently at the best of times. There is a seat for the driver and one other person in the forepart of the conveyance, but two, or even three, passengers generally squeeze in there, and the others make themselves as comfortable as they can in the after portion, where a narrow plank along either side serves as seat.

Of late years many of these waggons have been

brought into the country, and besides those that run between Hillah and Musseiyib and Baghdad, there are more or less regular services between Hillah and Kerbellah and Nejef. The best of the conveyances are owned by a Persian company, but there is a lively competition between them and the Turkish concern, which is a decided benefit to travellers. The charges naturally vary according to the demand for accommodation. In the height of the pilgrim traffic they are very high; but ordinarily a single passenger pays a *mejideh* for a seat. The *arabanahs* usually travel in companies of threes and fours for the sake of mutual protection. They are drawn by teams of mules or horses, four abreast, and as they have several relays stationed at different *khans*, they make the journey in much better time than a caravan can do.

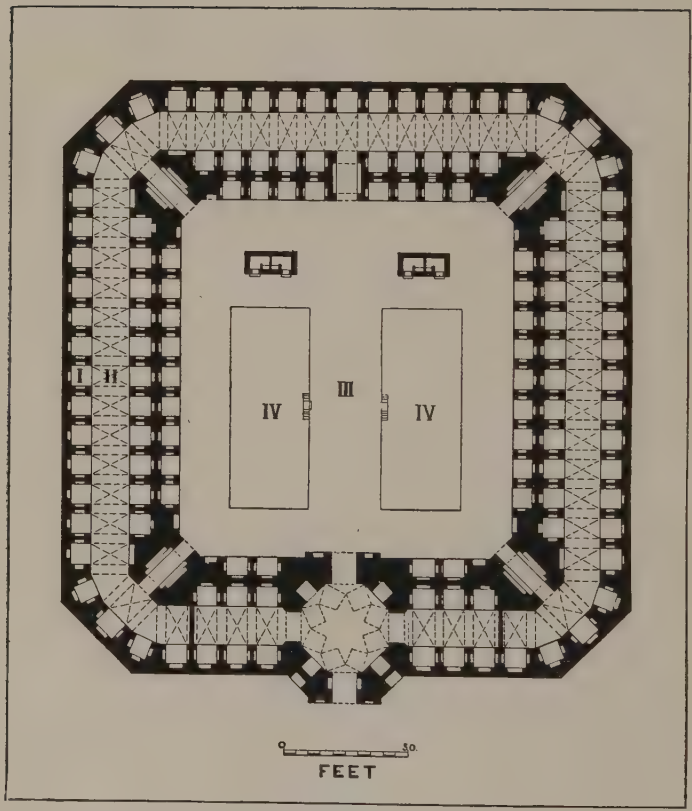
The roads to Hillah and Musseiyib separate at Mahmoudieh, the former running almost due south, the latter bearing more northerly.

Mahmoudieh has been spoken of before. It lies about four hours' distance from Baghdad, and a little to the south of the mounds of Abu Habba, where Rassam excavated on behalf of the British Museum in 1878–82. Its chief *khan* is a large building, and one of the finest on the road, but I have always found it too uncomfortably full to put up at. Most Europeans prefer to stop at a small *khan*, which stands in a narrow alley opposite the gate of the Government building, and is kept by a very civil Arab. The last time I was at

Mahmoudieh I noticed a large coffee-shop, built and kept by an enterprising Greek, who had imported into the desert some of the "luxuries" of civilisation, in the form of billiard- and card-tables! The village, if it can be dignified by such a title, is supported entirely by pilgrims *en route* for Kerbellah and Nejef, and travellers passing to and from Baghdad, so that I came to the conclusion that the Greek intended to cater for the Baghdadi gamblers, who would feel safer to game and quarrel out in the desert than in the town, where such practices bring a man into contempt.

From Mahmoudieh to Khan Haswa is about four hours' travel. The *khan* at the latter place is, as its name (Haswa = "gravel") implies, situated in a gravelly plain. It stands on a low hummock of limestone, is a very well-built place, and is kept fairly clean; but it has no upper chamber, so travellers have to content themselves with quarters on the ground-floor amongst the animals.

A short description of one of these roadside *khans* may be of interest. Usually, then, they are built round a large enclosure, and the outer walls are bare of all openings except the one great gateway. This bareness gives the buildings a forbidding aspect, but it is quite obvious that windows would be entirely out of place; and, moreover, the possibility of defending the *khan* against any attack by the Bedouin has always to be borne in mind. In the enclosure are two platforms, raised three or four feet above the ground, upon which travellers may stack their more bulky



PLAN OF KHAN HASWA, ON THE BAGHDAD-HILLAH ROAD.
I. Recesses for Travellers. II. Covered Way. III. Open Courtyard. IV. Raised Platforms for Baggage, etc.

articles of merchandise or baggage; and the platforms are usually provided with praying-places for the use of pilgrims and other piously-minded travellers. The enclosure is quite open to the sky in the centre, but around its walls are rows of arched recesses, similar to the booths in the bazaars, where travellers take up their quarters for the night. In the largest *khans* these exterior booths are supplemented by rows of similar shelters ranged round the building on opposite sides of a vaulted passage; and generally over the gateway there is a room, or sometimes two or three rooms. Being provided with shuttered windows, and raised above the dust and dirt of the lower floor, these upper chambers are regarded as more desirable than the booths below; and travellers who care for comfort and privacy generally seek to get possession of them by giving a *backsheesh* to the *khanchi*. There is no question of paying rent for your night's lodging in the ordinary way. Travellers simply take possession of any vacant booth, or booths, they fancy, and turn their animals loose in the courtyard; but the *khanchi* expects, and nearly always receives, a *backsheesh* according to the means of the travellers, and the number in their party. He also frequently earns money by supplying coffee, fuel, and other sundries to the guests, and by drawing water for man and beast.

From Haswa to the next *khan*, Mohaweel, is about four and a half hours' ride, and for the greater part of the time you have Musseiyib in sight to the north-west. At Mohaweel the

guest-room over the gateway is an exceptionally pleasant chamber in the hot season, for one of its walls is built of open tiles, thus giving plenty of ventilation, and it is so high above the ground that it catches all the breezes, and is far removed from the dust and smells of the lower part of the *khan* and of the little village which surrounds it.

Very shortly after leaving Mohaweel, you catch sight of the great flat-topped mound of Babel, which on the low plain appears a tremendous affair. In reality it is not much over a hundred yards square, and certainly not over a hundred and forty feet high. For centuries the Arabs have used it as a quarrying ground for bricks, and consequently, when you get quite close to it, the famous mound presents a disappointingly woebegone and pitiful appearance. All round Hillah you find houses built throughout of the fine bricks of Nebuchadnezzar. I remember seeing a guest-house (at Jumjuma, I fancy it was) paved with picked specimens, which seemed to have been chosen for the clearness of their inscriptions. And not only the villages in the immediate neighbourhood of the ruins, but such distant towns as Baghdad and Busreh owe much of their material to the same source.

Beyond Babel there are other large mounds, one of them capped with a tomb of a holy sheikh, a certain Amran ibn-Ali, picturesquely backed by the mass of dark foliaged date palms and the great river. That these mounds mark the site of that Babylon of which Nebuchadnezzar was so proud has been known for centuries; but although

many travellers have visited the spot and recorded their impressions of it, it was not until 1899, when the German party under Dr. Koldewey set to work to investigate their contents scientifically, that any true knowledge of what they contained was obtained.

The Germans have done wonders already. They employ over two hundred Arabs on the work, and they have a miniature railway, which enables them to clear rubbish from the mounds far more expeditiously than we were able to do at Niffer, and far more satisfactorily too. But it must be admitted that the results of their investigations are likely to prove extremely disappointing to the average person. For the ideas of Babylon's vastness and magnificence to which we have become accustomed have been prettily exploded. Dr. Koldewey told me, it is true, that the site of the city was "larger than that of any other ancient city"; but even so, the idea that it could be compared with London and its suburbs, which has been very generally held, is utterly erroneous. In point of fact, it appears that its walls were not more than eight miles in circumference. Moreover, the great palaces are shown to have been very poor affairs after all, with wretchedly cramped apartments and next to no pretensions to architectural style; and the temples were extremely crude buildings. In fact, it appears that we have taken the glories claimed for the place too much on trust, and have failed to make proper allowance for the advances that have been made in all directions since the events described in Daniel. As to the

celebrated mound of Birs Nimroud, which lies on the opposite side of the river to Babel, ever having been included in the limits of Nebuchadnezzar's city, the Germans scout the idea entirely. They have excavated there, and have discovered temple and palace buildings; but at present (I believe I am right in saying) they have not satisfactorily determined the purpose of the tower or the manner in which its bricks became fused in a way that has always puzzled visitors to the site.

However, all these things are doubtless well known to the reader, so I will write no more on the subject.

Hillah is quite a small town, although it stands on the two banks of the river, which are connected by a bridge of boats. The chief buildings and bazaars are situated on the right bank, where is a well-built *serai*. A considerable garrison is maintained, and a *kaimakam* has his seat in the town. But the place is hardly likely to rise to any importance, owing chiefly to the difficulty of navigating the Euphrates. It lies off the caravan routes between Baghdad and Aleppo, and Baghdad and Damascus, and its chief business is done with the pilgrims to Kerbellah and Nejef. But if communications are ever improved, there is every chance that it may become the centre for a big grain trade, for the surrounding country is well adapted for corn growing, and even under the existing circumstances a fair trade is done with Busreh by means of *sefinahs*. Below the town the river scenery is attractive, and the town itself is

clean and well kept. There is a numerous Jewish colony in the place, and much of the business is in their hands ; but there are very few Christians, and the merest sprinkling of Turks—all officials. The remainder of the population is Arab.

IX

UNHEALTHY on account of its swamps, and still too lawless to be a desirable dwelling-place for peaceably-minded folk, the district around Niffer is but sparsely peopled so far as a fixed population is concerned. But plenty of wandering tribes pass over its plains, and we frequently had large encampments within sight of the mounds; the es-Said pitched their tents quite close to us two or three times; and once a large camp of the famous Shammar was formed to the west of the mounds.

The Shammar are the most powerful tribe of the district, and their name is a terror to all the smaller tribes. We had heard alarming reports of their warlike propensities when we were on the road from Baghdad to Hillah; and we knew that the *wali* of Baghdad had only a shadow of authority over them; so that when their herds of camels appeared upon the horizon and we saw their tents rising in black lines over a mile in length, we understood the anxiety with which the local Arabs regarded their approach. Our own men were distinctly uneasy in presence of such neighbours, and the local guards told us lugubrious tales of

their thieving and murderous ways, and seemed inclined to bolt ingloriously upon the advance of an outpost party to our mounds. But the Commissioner readily accompanied me when I went over to talk to them.

Although they were not big men, they were finely built, and bore themselves in an independent and manly style that contrasted agreeably with the sneaking or swaggering demeanour of the Affech Arabs. As a rule, they were much lighter complexioned than the local Arabs, but I saw some unmistakable negroes in the party—presumably freed slaves or descendants of slaves. They were all quite friendly and ready to talk, and told us that their chief was named Megwhal, and that the party camped by us had two thousand horsemen and about three thousand camels. The latter estimate seemed to me well within the mark, for the plain was covered with the grazing camels as far as we could see in every direction, but whether the estimate of horsemen was correct I had no opportunity of judging. The horses I saw did not strike me as particularly fine, although they looked eminently serviceable; but all our men declared that the Shammar horses were the best in the world, and that their mares were unapproachable for speed and beauty. Those I saw were trapped out with hangings of red, blue, or grey cloth. The men themselves were very simply clad, in long white cotton shirts with brown and white *abbas*, and I noticed that most of them wore white *kefiyehs*. They were armed only with

daggers and long spears, but said they had many guns in their camp. To the shafts of the spears, just below the heads, were attached bunches of small chains and brass and iron discs, which serve the double purposes of charms and of making a wound given by the weapon much more severe. The warriors showed me how they wielded their weapons, and when I jokingly asked them not to spear me they all laughed and declared that they were friends with the English. Then they wanted to see my watch and compass, and were as interested in them as a party of children, but they could not understand why I required a compass to find my way in the desert. They invited me to visit their tents, saying that they intended moving nearer to us in a few days, and I gladly promised to do so. Unfortunately a rumour of war with the Muntefik reached their ears, and they all hastened off to join in the fun before I was able to carry out my intention. The glimpse I had of them left a pleasant impression on my mind; but the Affech Arabs breathed more freely when they had left, declaring that they were dreadful thieves, and had plundered right and left during their brief stay in the neighbourhood.

The half-settled Arabs of the Affech swamps have all the vices and none of the virtues of the Bedouin, so that I was amused to hear them refer to the Shammar as *harameer*. In the immediate neighbourhood of our mounds dwelt the el-Hamza tribes, who are divided into five branches. They have always been a thorn in the flesh of the Govern-

ment, for their swampy home is difficult of access to troops and artillery; and to all intents and purposes they are ruled only by their sheikhs, the chief of whom is Hajji Tarfa, a veteran warrior and diplomat, who has shown remarkable skill in steering his course through all troubles and difficulties. Next to him the most influential sheikh is Abud el-Hamid; and the other sheikhs at the time I was at Niffer were Hamid el-Burgid, Anud, Jamla, and Shaheen.

The last named was our nearest neighbour. He was a thorough firebrand, and was continually on the lookout for means whereby he could grasp power; and by lending his support to all manner of shady plots and intrigues he managed to acquire a certain amount of influence. At one time he openly broke with Abud, who was his over-lord, and announced his intention of defying all authority. As a good commencement to his programme of revolt, he declared that he would "wipe out the foreigners" (ourselves) and take possession of the "castle." By hook or by crook he got together a considerable following of ruffians and desperadoes, and for a short time none of us quite knew how the matter would end. For days he and Abud were "talking big" at one another from the tops of their mud forts across a canal, and frequent skirmishes took place between their followers. Then funds began to fail Shaheen, and his following rapidly melted away. The bottom fell out of his plot, and he himself was taken prisoner by Abud, whose authority and prestige received a distinct fillip by

his adroit handling of the situation. A few days after the patching up of a truce between the two sheikhs, we met Shaheen at Abud's guest-house, and all of us observed how civilly he treated us.

Fights and quarrels were the order of the day in that troubled region, but they seldom assumed serious proportions, generally ending in a more or less ludicrous "kiss and make it up" fashion. Blood feuds, however, were numerous, and frequently led up to tragedy. Too often they were prosecuted in a most cold-blooded manner, and treachery took the place of bravery. One very steady workman of ours, named Flayah, failed to put in an appearance at the mounds one morning; and inquiry as to the reason of his absence showed that he had been shot in a most cowardly fashion, while on his way to the work with some half-dozen of his friends. In the half-light of the dawn, as they passed a clump of bushes, three men armed with guns sprang up before the party and seized hold of Flayah. He and his friends were unarmed and could offer no resistance; and one of the assassins after explaining that Flayah was a blood relative of an Arab who had killed a brother of his (the assailant's), deliberately placed his gun to the poor fellow's head and blew his brains out. Then the attacking party fled, while one of the murdered man's friends rushed off to give information of the crime at his village. Of course, the dead man's nearest relative was bound to avenge him; and so the see-saw of the vendetta would go, until either a blood fine was paid, or there was no male relative of one side left. On another

occasion, when Mr. Fisher was left in charge of the camp, while Dr. Hilprecht, Mr. Haynes, and I were away visiting some neighbouring mounds, a quarrel arose between two of the workmen. It appears that the father of one of them had borrowed half a *mejideh* (two shillings) from the father of the other about nine years previously, and the son of the creditor suddenly demanded payment of the amount from the son of the debtor. The second, taken quite aback, declared that he had no knowledge of the transaction alleged, but that if it could be proved he would pay the money for the sake of his father's good name. High words ensued, and the first man suddenly drawing his dagger stabbed the other. Fortunately the wound, although serious, was not fatal; but imagine blood being spilt over such a paltry affair!

The principal village of the district was Sook el-Affech, where there was a small bazaar; and there, on market days, our workmen used to go to purchase their provisions and tobacco. It was a very poor village, but its inhabitants generally spoke of it as a "city." I only visited the place once, and saw nothing in it to call for notice.

The entire district has been always a place of refuge for bad characters. Several of our workmen openly admitted that they had formerly gained their living by thieving. In all probability they have returned to the calling now that the regular work at the mounds is knocked off.

At one time a particularly notorious outlaw, one Ahmet Bey, who had formerly held the rank of

captain in the Turkish army, sought shelter with Shaheen. He was a Kurd, and whatever his faults may have been he certainly had plenty of dash. Pardoned once and reinstated in official favour, he found the delights of the wild robber's life too alluring and took to the road a second time, managing to carry off a number of army rifles with him. By distributing these weapons judiciously he secured to himself many friends, and with the aid of Shaheen and other reckless characters he eluded capture for some time and terrorised the vilayet completely. The caravans of pilgrims to Nejef and Kerbellah yielded him rich booty, and he showed no compunction in relieving the pious travellers of offerings intended for the sacred mosques. At length, however, misfortune overtook him. He was wounded by a Christian merchant of Koot, into whose house he had broken; and as he was making his way across the plain to his sanctuary with Shaheen, he was ambushed and shot by an Arab for the sake of the reward that was on his head. He appears to have been a brutal character, and to have delighted in cruelty for its own sake, for whenever he captured any women he used to take them out into the desert and there leave them to die of thirst and starvation. Yet he was looked up to and admired as a hero during his lifetime.

A very different character was Suleiman, who visited our camp on New Year's Eve of 1900. He robbed only the rich, and was generous to the poor. Full of dash and of reckless bravery, he was greatly

admired by the Arabs, and certainly some of his exploits were remarkable. On one occasion, with the merest handful of followers, he ambushed an official, who was proceeding to take up a Government appointment, accompanied by his wives and a numerous retinue and escorted by more than a dozen soldiers. The great man's flotilla was stopped by Suleiman's party at a point not far from Daghara; the boats were carried by assault; the guards overcome; the official himself severely wounded; and the robbers got clear away with a large sum of money and a quantity of jewels. Another time he broke into the house of the Governor of Koot el-Amarah at night, and made his way to the room where the governor was asleep, intending to kill him. Shortly before this the over-zealous officer of the Government had been very active against the robber, and had actually succeeded in capturing him and sending him a prisoner to Baghdad; but Suleiman escaped from prison, and lost no time in making his way to Koot el-Amarah to pay off the score. Nor did anything but his own chivalry hinder him from taking his revenge; for he easily made his way to the governor's room, and there his enemy lay at his mercy; but the sight of the husband and wife lying side by side touched his compassion and he spared his foe. To prove that he had been in the room he took a revolver from under the officer's pillow, without waking him, and then, having secured a bag of gold, he went off as he had come, unobserved. Next day he sent a message to his enemy, saying,

"Why did you seek to destroy me? Last night I had it in my power to kill you, but God stayed my hand, and I spared you. Now, if you want me, come and take me, man to man." As proof of his story he returned the revolver; and it is said the governor was greatly impressed at his own narrow escape and his opponent's magnanimity.

Dozens of instances of his daring might be told, but his visit to our camp was in itself a proof of his fearlessness. A price was on his head at the time, yet he came alone to a spot where there were six *zaptiehs* armed with rifles, and some forty or fifty armed workmen, not to mention ourselves. But, of course, he knew that no Christian would willingly kill or attack a Mohammedan, since it would mean almost certain death to himself at once. Riding up to the guard-house he alighted and entered fearlessly. The *zaptiehs* sprang to their feet—but not to seize him. They literally fell over one another in their anxiety to do him honour. The corporal hastened to feed Suleiman's horse with corn which was meant for their own bread, holding it in his own best coat; and his underlings spread rugs for the redoubtable hero to sit upon, and offered him their own suppers. After making every allowance for Arab notions of hospitality, such a warm welcome strikes me at least as deliciously humorous.

Suleiman first asked to see Mr. Haynes, who declined the honour of an introduction, fearing to give offence to the Turks if he appeared to tolerate the presence of a proscribed man at the camp.

He then inquired for myself and Mr. Fisher; but naturally we had to fall in with Mr. Haynes' wishes, although we all three should have liked to see the famous robber face to face. We therefore contented ourselves by watching the comedy from the house-top. From what I saw of him I should say that he was not a big man, and his expression seemed to me pleasing and rather gentle—anything but what I had pictured him. For some four hours he stayed in the camp, fêted and made much of, and when he departed all the men joined in a *hoseh* in his honour. The situation struck me as worthy of one of Mr. Gilbert's whimsical operas. But soon afterwards it was capped altogether. Shoket Bey, the official whose life Suleiman had spared at Koot el-Amarah, was promoted to Hillah; and from motives of policy, or of gratitude, he obtained a free pardon for the daring robber, and gave him a post under Government.

X

NIFFER lies midway between the Euphrates and the Tigris, and its mounds are intersected by the bed of the old Shatt en-Nil, which was one of the principal canals of Babylonia. The ancient city owed its importance chiefly to the fact that its great temple was regarded as the veritable home of Bel, "the father of the gods." The Babylonians called the place Nippur; and Professor Hilprecht has identified the canal with that "River Chebar in the land of the Chaldæans," upon the banks of which Ezekiel saw his vision of the cherubims.

Writing of the mounds as the American expedition first saw them, Dr. Peters says: "In outward appearance, like most of the ruins of the country, they are merely a group of clay hills, which might be mistaken for a natural formation, were it not for the fragments of brick, pottery, and glass with which the surface is so thickly strewn. The main mass of hills or mounds is about a mile in circumference, but about these again there is a slightly raised surface strewn with pottery fragments extending to a great distance and shading off imperceptibly into the plain, and small outlying mounds occur

at the distance of a couple of miles from the main group. The latter represents the ancient city within the walls. This is divided into almost equal parts by a deep depression, called by the natives Shat en-Nil, or canal of the Nil, running through the mounds from north-west to south-east, and representing an ancient ship canal, which left the Euphrates at Babylon, about sixty miles to the north-west, and on which lay some of the most important cities of the country. The highest mound in the group, and the only one with an individual name, Bint el-Amir, or Prince's Daughter, lies on the north-eastern side of the canal. This was a conical, sharp hill, ninety-four feet above the actual plain level, by Sir Henry Rawlinson's measurements, and twenty-four metres, or about seventy-eight feet above the present level of the canal-bed, according to the measurements of Mr. Field, our engineer. Several points on the south-western side of the canal reach an almost equal altitude, and the average height of the mound may be given as forty-five feet above the level of the canal-bed."

The excavations have altered the appearance of the place very considerably, more especially as regards those mounds lying to the east of the Shatt en-Nil, which are now fringed with great heaps of earth removed from their interior. And at present the summit of the *ziggurat* is capped with a small building erected by Mr. Haynes, at the commencement of the latest campaign, to serve as a shelter-house from which to overlook the workmen. The accompanying sketch plan will serve to render a

description of the site more easily understood. The ruins, it will be seen, are split up by the Shatt en-Nil and the "branch canal" into three main divisions.

The mounds on the west of the bed of the canal have received less attention than those on the east; but the portions excavated have produced one of the most complete buildings cleared up to the present date, a small but extremely interesting palace of the Parthian period; and at the southern extremity a long wall has been traced for about five hundred feet. Several houses and shops have been discovered between the two points mentioned; and some tunnels driven in the early days of the work have shown that highly important structures of an early period may be looked for in the lower strata. The north-west portion of these mounds is practically unexplored. We members of the expedition called the triangular mound B, to the south-east of the branch canal, "Tablet Hill." It covers the library and schools of the ancient city, from which an incomparable collection of tablets has been already obtained; and more of the precious documents may be confidently looked for when the mound is further examined. But it is in the mounds on the north of the branch canal that interest chiefly centres. They represent what may be called the "sacred city," which consisted of the great Temple of Bel, with its *ziggurat*, its "residence" and "shrine" of the god and his consort, its storehouses, its spacious courts, its numerous "houses" of minor gods and goddesses,

and its ample accommodation for the large staff of priests and assistants attached to the holy building. This part of the city was walled; and it is almost certain that a moat, or canal, leading off from the Shatt en-Nil at the north, ran outside the wall and connected with the branch canal to the south. The low mounds marked C2 and C4 represent portions of the wall, while at C3 a deeply interesting gate of pre-Sargonic construction was found by us at a very low level.

To give detailed descriptions of all the buildings which have been either partially or completely laid bare would require a bulky volume to itself, and all I shall attempt will be to present a slight sketch of their main features. For further particulars I refer the reader to the account of the excavations given by Professor Hilprecht in his book *Explorations in Bible Lands during the 19th Century*.[1] A volume dealing with the architectural features of "Ekur, the Temple of Bel at Nippur" is to be published shortly. Dr. Peters gives a description of the first two expeditions, of which he was director, in *Nippur* (2 vols., published by Putnam, 1897). Numerous articles on the work have appeared in the American press; and in *The Times* of 2nd June, and *The Monthly Review* for September (1903), I have given some account of the chief items of interest at the site.

At present the mounds are very far from being completely cleared; but owing to the system of

[1] English Edition published by Messrs. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh.

excavating that has been followed, some of the earliest buildings are as fully exposed as the less important ones belonging to early Arabic days. From the point of view of the scientific excavator this state of affairs is not one to be proud of; but that point need not be dwelt upon at present, since it will be noticed hereafter; and we will therefore turn to a brief consideration of the ruins which have been laid open to inspection. The dates I give are those ascribed to the different structures and their builders by Dr. Hilprecht; and in all cases where there is any doubt concerning the purpose or arrangement of any particular building, I have followed his authority, considering it unnecessary to trouble the reader with any different theories in such a sketch as this.

The small palace at Ai was one of the finds of the first expedition, being discovered quite by chance, but it was not completely cleared or accurately planned until towards the close of the latest campaign. As already mentioned, it was one of the best preserved ruins of the site so far as its plan was concerned; and we therefore found it particularly interesting, because we were easily able to picture it in the days of its occupation. There was ample evidence that it had been the scene of a conflagration, the walls being scorched in many places, and large quantities of charred grain being found on the floors of the store-rooms and elsewhere in the building; but whether the fire was the result of accident or the work of incendiaries we did not discover. Unlike most of the buildings we cleared,

the palace offered evidence of having been carefully designed by architects who thought more of a balanced plan and refinement in details than of a mere piling up of ponderous masses of brickwork. Indeed, the plan alone could not fail to show "the absolutely un-Babylonian character of the palace," and its style of architecture is unmistakably Hellenistic in its essentials.

Most of the builders of Nippur had not scrupled to make use of materials taken from older buildings, plundering burned bricks from the works of their predecessors as best suited their own purposes; but the builders of this palace, for some reason, did not follow the same system. They employed burned bricks very sparingly, and seem to have moulded specially most of those which they did use. The bulk of the walls is of crude bricks, about a foot square and seven inches deep; and only in the columns, pavements, steps, and thresholds were burned bricks used. With such material the builders were heavily handicapped in their attempt to produce a first-class building; but they overcame the difficulty in a measure by employing a hard white plaster for stuccoing such parts as the columns and the principal doorway. Possibly the surfaces of the walls of the principal apartments also were floated with a plaster of a similar nature but of inferior quality, which would not have been so well preserved as the better material; but we found no traces of the existence of such plaster, save an appearance of "keying" at certain points.

The exterior of the palace was extremely simple.

The surfaces of three of the walls were relieved by broad but shallow buttresses, but that of the fourth, which was opposite the canal, was perfectly plain. This fact rather suggests that the space between the building and the waterway was occupied by houses which masked the elevation of the palace. The only opening in the outer walls was a doorway, placed in the centre of the north-west façade. Upon either side of this entrance stood a pedimented pedestal of graceful form, enriched with mouldings formed in plaster and apparently serving as a base for a fluted pilaster. Unfortunately the stucco had decayed badly, and the remains of the walls themselves at this important point were only a few feet high, so that the treatment of the head of the doorway must be entirely a matter of conjecture.

The building was practically square on plan, each side being roughly one hundred and seventy-one feet long. Its angles, however, although they were set out with far greater accuracy than those of most of the buildings at Nippur, were not quite right angles. Internally, it was divided into two nearly equal portions, of which one was again split up into the women's quarters and the domestic offices. The half nearest the canal was reserved for the men's rooms and the public apartments, which were grouped about a court round which ran a colonnade. This courtyard was the first part of the building to be hit upon by Dr. Peters, who dubbed it "The Court of Columns," a title which has clung to it and been extended by members of the later expeditions to the entire building. Its centre was open to

the sky. At each angle of the colonnade stood a square column, and between them, on all four sides, were four columns, built up of rings of burned brickwork, tapering and provided with capitals formed of specially moulded bricks. That they were built up roughly, and afterwards dressed to shape with chisel and stuccoed with splendid plaster, there can be small doubt. They bore a strong resemblance to the pure Doric column, of which they certainly were copies. Of the "square columns" at the angles no traces remained when I first saw the building, but since Dr. Peters describes them there can be no doubt that they formed a part of the original scheme of the court. Of the roof of the colonnade nothing remained but a few fragments of charred timber; and the paving of the entire enclosure seems to have been of unbaked brick, excepting between the columns, where a double row of burned bricks formed a curb between the colonnade and the open court, suggesting to my mind that the floor of the latter was slightly lower than that of the former. The rooms in this section of the palace were nearly all small for such a building, according to modern ideas; but they were larger than those in the other half; and the "men's hall" (48 ft. 6 in. by 38 ft. 6 in.) and the "atrium" were fairly roomy. The servants' quarters and the "harem" were so arranged as to secure the greatest privacy, and at the same time to be easily controlled by the guards and porter. The rooms in the former section were particularly small and poorly lit, but in the kitchen we discovered a raised hearth, with a

hollowed stone which was provided with niches to hold spits, and bricks set on edge to support cooking pots over the fire. In the harem was a bitumen-paved bath-room, a "strong room," and several sleeping apartments (with brickwork benches, or "beds"), for the owner of the palace and the ladies of his household. There was also a small open court, with a deep portico, where stood two more columns and antæ of brickwork.

Throughout the excavation of this palace we constantly came upon burials of a late period, and the upper strata of the mound were full of remains of unimportant buildings and relics of early Arabic days—coins, pottery, trinkets, and such trifles.

The subject of the burials of the site is to me a most fascinating one, for my experiences at Deshasheh and Oxyrhynchus showed me what interesting sidelights are thrown upon the lives and characters of bygone peoples by their burial customs and by the character of their skulls; but I am aware that to most readers it would prove quite the reverse; so I will touch only lightly upon it. Suffice it, then, to say that throughout its history Nippur appears to have been a highly esteemed spot for interments; and just as bodies are brought from far distant places to Nejef and Kerbellah at the present day, in the days when Nippur was a place of peculiar sanctity the Babylonians brought their dead to it for burial. And again, just as many other mounds in the country (and in Egypt too) are favourite spots with Mohammedans for the tombs of the departed faithful, so

in the early days of Nippur's decline the Arabs considered the site an eligible one for funereal purposes. Consequently, at all levels and at all parts of the mounds, we came upon graves, coffins, and tombs, the resting-places of Arabs, Parthians, Babylonians, and Chaldæans. The coffins were of all sorts, shapes, and sizes; but probably the most common form was that of the earthen jar; and the strange "slipper coffin" was plentifully represented in all its types, from the short, squat, plain yellow ones to the long, elaborately decorated and beautifully glazed specimens which are the pride of many Western museums.

As might be expected, the burials in the damp, salt-laden soil of Niffer were never so well preserved as those I had seen in the rock-cut tombs of Deshasheh, or even in the gravelly plains by Behneseh and Bahsamun. But now and again we hit upon an interesting tomb. Of these the one most likely to appeal to the imagination of the average reader was that which we called "The Gold-find Tomb." It lay in the upper levels of the temple mound, beneath one of the rooms on the outer wall of the Parthian fortress, which is described hereafter. In this instance, the burial had been made in a brick-lined vault, and thanks to its high position and the care that had been bestowed upon the building of the chamber it was singularly well preserved. Well do I remember the excitement of the gang who found it. And small wonder they were excited, for through the small doorway a glint of yellow metal could be

seen. With feverish energy the foreman, Abud el-Gumbar, and his first assistant, Hussein, cleared away the surrounding rubbish, and soon we were able to investigate the place and its contents. Only Mr. Haynes, Mr. Fisher, Abd el-Kader, and I were allowed inside at first. Afterwards Abud and one of his most trusty men were permitted to assist in the gathering of the "treasure," and the Commissioner was particularly watchful throughout the operations.

There were but two burials in the vault, and the evidence pointed to the fact that they were those of officers of high rank connected with the Parthian fortress. They had originally rested in large wooden coffins, which had been bound with iron bands and provided with silver handles for lifting them by; but the wood had decayed and mouldered away almost entirely; the metal was so corroded that it broke at the least touch; and of the clothes in which the dead had been wrapped, only a few handfuls of tindery brown fragments remained. In one corner of the tomb stood two large jars for wine or water, and in another a few earthenware platters which had originally held food. Thanks to the care with which its entrance had been built up, the place had remained undisturbed after the second interment, until Abud lighted upon it. The articles of gold lay near the bodies, having evidently been placed upon them in the coffins. They were not of great intrinsic worth, but their workmanship was artistically superior to most of the objects of the later periods

discovered at the site, and their value in helping to date the building to which they belonged was great. For amongst them was a coin with the inscription TI. CÆSAR DIVI AUG F AUGUSTUS, which shows that the burials cannot have taken place before 14 A.D. Near each skull was a thin sheet of beaten gold in a diamond form and a scalloped band of the same metal, which had been bound on the brows of the dead. A small gold ring, about fifty small gold buttons and a dozen larger ones, and two heavy gold buckles, which appeared to have been used in fastening the sandals, were also found. The buckles were decorated with lions' heads excellently modelled in high relief, and set with rubies and turquoise; and each was provided with a solid wedge of gold for fastening.

Abud's gang were in high feather over their find, and as might be expected they talked so much of it that in a day or two startling rumours of "gold mines" were in the air. That we were not favoured with another mission from Diwaniyeh was due to the sensible way in which Abd el-Kader took the matter, no doubt. As luck would have it, the Saturday of the discovery was a particularly wet day, and we had to close the vault up before it had been completely examined. It was reopened on the Monday, searched, and pronounced "quite cleared"; but on taking another look round I discovered the golden wedge of one of the buckles lodged in a crevice of the brick flooring. Of course, I immediately handed it over to Mr. Haynes; but I could not help thinking what a

blessing it would be to have one or two of Professor Petrie's men at Niffer—and Professor Petrie too! They would not have made such a slip, I warrant.

Before leaving the subject of the burials of the site, I ought to add that upon examining the lower strata of the temple buildings Professor Hilprecht discovered traces of many pre-Sargonic burials within the sacred area itself; and that he reached the conclusion that the bodies had been cremated, probably within the temple enclosure in many cases. Again, the long wall at A on the plan, of which I have made mention above, was a facing wall to a pre-Sargonic cemetery; and the Professor points out that similar walls have been found at Surghul and el-Hibba by Dr. Koldewey.

In "Tablet Hill" excavations have been carried down to the plain level at two points. The buildings in this area are poorly preserved, but the precious cuneiform tablets they contained in such surprising numbers have raised this portion of the excavations to first-rate importance. The walls of all the rooms which have been cleared out so far are built of unbaked bricks of a small mould, but we found burned bricks used at one or two points, such as in jambs of doorways. The rooms are mostly small, and must have been dark and none too comfortable; but they served important purposes, for the tablets discovered in them show that they were the buildings of the schools and the temple library. Those nearest to the Shatt en-Nil seem to have been devoted chiefly to the busi-

ness concerns of the great temple, for in the south-west of the two excavated areas business records were numerous; but in the rooms of the north-east section the documents are all of a literary character. Exercise tablets and school books were found in numbers, and scientific works were secured by the thousand. The student at this great college plainly had a magnificent library to draw upon for reference, and a well-arranged one too, for the works were classified by subject and stored on separate shelves (or ledges) and in distinct rooms. The subject is a tempting one to dwell upon, but here again I can only refer the reader to Professor Hilprecht; for the most important mound Bint el-Amir and its adjuncts still remain to be noticed.

As I have said above, the whole area of the site north of the branch canal and north-east of the Shatt en-Nil may be considered as having been occupied by the sacred city, which was most probably surrounded by water and walled. It is not yet quite certain whether a wall ran beside the Shatt en-Nil, or whether the broad canal itself was deemed a sufficient protection in that direction; but with regard to the north-east there can be no doubt on the matter; for there we found traces of a massively constructed wall, which existed in pre-Sargonic days and was rebuilt and strengthened from time to time as occasion required. And we know that the temple proper, consisting of two great courts, the *ziggurat*, the "house of Bel," and other buildings, was certainly enclosed by a wall called *Imgur Marduk* ("Marduk was favourable").

The outer wall was known as *Nimit Marduk* (*i.e.* "The Foundation of Marduk, or Merodach"). In it, at C3 on the plan, we found a pre-Sargonic gateway, built of "thumb-marked" bricks; and there is little doubt that the canal or moat was crossed by a bridge at this point. The gateway had a broad road, slanting upwards from the exterior, at its centre, and upon either side a narrow gallery, approached by flights of steps, for pedestrians. The steps and the slope up were necessary because the level inside the wall was higher than that of the plain outside. The space between this wall, the canal, and the temple proper on the south, appears to have contained the dwellings of the priests, the quarters of the temple attendants, and some booths and outhouses. But save along the faces of the wall itself, it remains largely unexplored. The excavations show that the present remains of *Nimit Marduk* belong chiefly to the days of Ur-Gur (2700 B.C.), who was responsible for much important building work at Nippur. But Naram-Sin (3800 B.C.) also had built a solid rampart on much the same lines as those followed by the later king. And that a wall of no mean size existed in pre-Sargonic days, the gateway already mentioned sufficiently proves. Other builders patched and repaired the structure at different times, but the traces of their work are very slight compared with those of Ur-Gur and Naram-Sin. In the time of the first-mentioned king it was about twenty-five feet thick, and along its outer face, at a distance of about thirty feet from each other, there were

buttresses, which projected two feet beyond the main face and were a little over eleven feet in width on an average. Both faces of the wall had a pronounced batter, and both were plastered with mud—the wall being built of crude bricks.

Imgur Marduk enclosed the temple proper. The chief entrance to the building seems to have been situated in the south-eastern façade, facing the branch canal. At this point there appears to have been a landing-stage, and probably there was also a path or road before the wall. Through an imposing gateway the devout worshippers of Bel passed in to a great court which was studded with "houses" or chapels of some twenty-five gods and goddesses. It is curious that Bel himself had a "house" in this court, in addition to his fine residence in the inner enclosure, which is to be noticed hereafter. But, according to Dr. Hilprecht, it was only into the outer court that the majority of worshippers were allowed to enter, the inner one being regarded as too holy a place for any but the priests, and possibly a few privileged notables, to penetrate. This outer court still awaits investigation, being covered at present not only by the original rubbish, but also by large mounds of earth removed from the interior court. It is clear, however, that it was a little smaller than the inner one, its sides being about two hundred and sixty feet in length; and in all probability the walls and gates were precisely similar in both courts. But whether the houses of the gods were arranged systematically (*e.g.* in an avenue leading from the outer to the inner gate),

or were built haphazard over the court, is not yet known.

Between the two courts stood a wall of unburned brick, with a slightly sloping face, which was divided into panels by means of shallow buttresses in the same style as *Nimit Marduk*. Nearly in its centre stood a fine gate, of which sufficient traces remain, fortunately, to give us a fair idea of its appearance; and as a second gate of a similar character, but somewhat smaller, has been discovered in the opposite wall of the inner court, it is safe to conclude that all the entrances to the temple were treated in the same style.

Over the gate between the two courts the builders of the fortress had placed a particularly solid tower, and as Mr. Haynes had never been able to make up his mind to remove the late structure, on account of the labour involved in the undertaking, it was not until Mr. Fisher and I arrived on the scene that any one of the temple entrances was discovered. We both thought, however, that the gate would be found at this spot, and when Mr. Haynes asked my opinion I unhesitatingly advised the demolition of the tower. When it was undertaken, as may be imagined, I watched the work with a good deal of anxiety, since the correctness of the first opinion I had hazarded would be proved or disproved by the result. As it turned out, my forecast was a correct one. Below the tower some panels were brought to light; gradually the plan of the gate became more and more clear; and finally, although a portion of it

A DOOR SOCKET (INSCRIBED) AT THE INNER GATE OF THE TEMPLE OF BEL.

had been accidentally removed during the work of the previous campaigns, we were able to restore it with certainty. It projected considerably beyond both faces of the wall dividing the courts. On plan it was stepped back in a series of recesses, leaving the actual entrance only six feet wide. Its faces were decorated with narrow vertical panels, in the usual style of Babylonian gates; and in the thickness of its brickwork on either side a small room was contrived for the doorkeepers. Too little of its height remains to suggest how the top was treated. But, from fragments of paving (burned brick) discovered, it seems that the threshold was approached by a series of shallow, sloping steps. The door turned upon a metal-shod pivot resting in a solid stone door-socket, which was inscribed with the name and titles of Ur-Gur.[1]

The spacious inner court was paved with burned bricks, which were usually inscribed with the name of the king, and the pavements were traversed by well-built watercourses. Against the walls were built narrow, vault-like store-chambers, in which were found tablets, bowls, vases, and other articles used in the service of the temple. That the court was adorned with statues seems highly probable from numerous fragments discovered at different points of its area; and doubtless there

[1] Professor Hilprecht has kindly interpreted the inscription for me. It reads: "To Bel, king of the countries, his king, Ur-Gur, the powerful champion, king of Ur, king of Shumer and Accad, Ekur, his beloved temple, has constructed." This door-socket was re-used, by Ashurbanipal (668–626 B.C.) apparently, for it was found by us at the level of his work.

were altars of stone and of brick placed at suitable spots. In accordance with the Babylonian custom, the four corners of the enclosure pointed approximately to the four cardinal points, but the walls were not set out truly at right angles with one another, the north-east one being especially out. Somewhere in the eastern quarter of the court must have stood the principal storehouse of the temple, which is spoken of in the inscriptions as "the house for honey, cream, and wine." In the northern quarter was the home of the god, where he dwelt with his consort, Beltis, and where the most precious of the kingly and princely votive offerings were deposited. In the western quarter stood the great *ziggurat*, on the uppermost stage of which rested the "shrine of Bel." For an explanation of the remarkable state of affairs which led to the god having his earthly residence and his tomb in juxtaposition to one another in this fashion, I must once again refer the reader to Professor Hilprecht's book (p. 462, etc.). All I can do is to state that they actually did stand as described.

The "house" has not yet been cleared, but its boundary wall has been followed up and found to enclose a space about one hundred and fifty feet long by one hundred and fifteen feet wide. The house was built with a wall of a similar description to that round the courts, that is to say, it had a panelled face; but in the latest rebuilding at least burned bricks were used in its construction, and bitumen was employed to make it thoroughly weather-proof and worthy of habitation by the

god. Doubtless the next expedition will succeed in ascertaining the character of the interior of this important building, and so place us in possession of a knowledge of the domestic arrangements of Bel's household.

Important as this house of Bel doubtless was, and sacred as it must have appeared to the Babylonians, it is tolerably certain that the high-towering *ziggurat* must have struck their imagination and stirred their sentiments still more forcibly. For as worshippers drew near to the holy city they would see from afar the great "mountain of Bel," capped with the shrine which assuredly glittered in the sun, being enriched with glazed bricks and tiles, if not with gold. In the same way, the gold-capped domes of Meshed Ali and Meshed Hussein, and of the mosque of Kazimaim, welcome the traveller long before he reaches the holy places, and they generally leave a more lasting impression upon him than do the shrines themselves. The approach to its upper stages stood on the south-east side of the *ziggurat*, and somewhat to the left of the entrance from the outer court. The structure always struck us as a tremendous mass of brickwork to have been built up, even when we took into account that it was not the work of a single builder, but had grown from small beginnings until in Ashurbanipal's reign its length was one hundred and ninety feet and its breadth one hundred and twenty-eight feet. It originally consisted of five stages, but time, weather, and the Parthian invaders have so altered and damaged it that only three of its stages remain

at the present day. Its core was of crude brick, but it was faced with burned bricks, and in its latter days, at least, its lower stages were panelled. Dating from Ur-Gur's work there are a couple of well-built watercourses to drain the pavements of the different stages. Between the *ziggurat* and the north-west wall there was a narrow passage from which a gateway (referred to above) led off to the great open court C5.

The reader must clearly understand that although the principal features of the temple remained practically the same throughout its long history, it nevertheless underwent a great number of alterations. A king would lay a new pavement over an old one, add to or repair walls, even increase the dimensions of the *ziggurat* by adding a facing wall on one or more sides, just as he saw fit; and he seldom paid much heed to the work of his predecessors, pulling it down for the sake of its material, or building walls over it, as best suited his own design. Ur-Gur was the first builder to employ burned bricks in facing the *ziggurat*, for instance; and at the same time he laid a new pavement to the inner court, after completely covering up the pavement of Naram-Sin and filling up the ground inside the walls with a double layer of worked clay about eight feet in depth. But Naram-Sin had overbuilt the pre-Sargonic *ziggurat*; and in its turn the pavement of Ur-Gur was covered by that of Ur-Ninib, after which came those of Kadashman-Turgu and Ashurbanipal—to mention only the most important of the builders.

From the very brief sketch I have given of the place, it will be apparent that the temple depended for effect more upon its great size and its massive construction than on any refinement or beauty of proportion in its component parts. Its open courts do not possess the attraction of mystery which was so carefully aimed at and so successfully attained in the Egyptian temples, and the absence of columns used as a decorative element is a distinct loss to the building. Moreover, it had none of that richness of colouring or of stone-carving which are associated with the Nile sanctuaries. Nevertheless, in the days of its prime, when it was adorned with statues, steles, vases, and all the paraphernalia used in the ceremonial worship of great Bel, it must have presented a magnificent appearance; and when its courts were thronged with priests and worshippers at the time of high festivals, it would have been a sight hard to beat, or even to equal, in those days and that country.

But if its buildings were massive in construction, what shall be said of the Parthian fortress which was built over the *ziggurat* and the two courts of the temple? Its very bricks were enormous, rivalling even those of Naram-Sin in size,[1] and it was constructed throughout in a way that may well be termed Cyclopean. Between this great building and the remains of the latest temple structure we found a few traces of an earlier fort, which in all

[1] Some of Naram-Sin's bricks in the wall (at C4) measured roughly 19½ in. sq. by 3 in. Those of the later fortress were 12½ × 11⅝ × 9 in.; and of the earlier (Seleucidan) fortress, 12½ × 12½ × 6 in.

probability was built in the days of Seleucia's short-lived power. But since they were very slight, and as the building to which they belonged appeared to have been much on the same lines as its Parthian successor, I need do no more than mention their existence.

The builders of the fort had reason to thank the pious Babylonians whose industrious care had resulted in the raising of a fine artificial mound which served admirably as a core for their fortification. The *ziggurat* especially, towering above the rest of the city and commanding a wide outlook across the plain, must have struck the invaders as a splendid nucleus for a great citadel; and we may be sure that when the place fell into their hands they lost no time in remodelling both the stage-tower and temple to suit their own warlike purposes. The building they raised was one of which they had good reason to be proud.

Since they followed on the lines of the temple, they produced two courts; but it is of the inner one alone that as yet we know anything definite. This is owing to the reasons stated above in connection with the corresponding portion of the temple. The exterior walls were over fifty feet high, forty feet wide at the base, and some thirty feet at the top, and they were strengthened by enormous buttresses at the angles, with smaller ones between. On the south-east of the building there was an interior wall also, with three circular towers projecting from it, to enable slingers and archers to maintain a cross-fire upon any assailants. On the north-east the two

walls appear to have been connected at some spots by cross walls. This is a somewhat curious feature, since such walls would have offered a passage for any enemy who should succeed in gaining a footing upon the outer fortification; but the state of the ruins in this direction is not good, and no doubt some method of remedying the defect was devised by the builders,—possibly the cross walls were kept much below the principal ones.

Inside the enclosure stood quite a town, with streets and several distinct houses. The area between the *ziggurat* and the south-east wall appears to have been given up to the quarters of the garrison, storehouses, and similar purposes. In the angle north of the *ziggurat*-citadel stood some spacious apartments, which were doubtless designed for the use of the governor of the fortress and town. The principal rooms in this section were provided with double walls, which would render them cool in the heat of summer; in some of them were recesses in the walls, such as are contrived in houses of the present day in the country to take the place of shelves and cupboards; and wide corridors served still further to keep the apartments cool and to secure their privacy. In the west quarter, which has been but slightly examined, it appears that the "harem" was situated. I must add that on top of three of the outer walls of the fortification we found a number of small rooms, which doubtless accommodated the soldiers who were charged with the defence of this portion of the building.

The citadel itself was cruciform on plan, this form probably having been suggested to the builders (as Professor Hilprecht pointed out to us) by the existence of the causeway leading to the upper stages of the *ziggurat*. For, in casing the early structure, the builders of the first citadel added an arm where this approach was placed, and built similar arms on each of the other three faces. In the Parthian building these arms projected nearly fifty feet from the principal faces of the citadel, and were from forty-five to sixty feet in width. There were two platforms to the structure, to judge by the amount of débris on top of the lower one; and most likely upon the upper one there stood some buildings to afford shelter to the garrison from the missiles of the enemy and the pitiless summer sun. The citadel was faced with burned bricks to add to its strength and appearance. But despite its powers of defence, the place would have been unable to offer any prolonged resistance against an enemy without a good supply of water; and therefore its practically minded builders, with infinite toil and patience, had sunk a well through the solid core of the *ziggurat* down to water-level, carrying it up to the platform on which they would make their last stand in case of need.

Of the history of this interesting fortress we know even less than of that of the earlier buildings. Future excavations may serve to throw light upon the subject, but at present we cannot say with certainty even where the entrance lay. If it is ever found, it will probably prove to have been placed

at the north angle, near the governor's apartments.

After they have been cleared, planned, and had all their details recorded, it will be necessary to remove the whole of these Parthian remains in order to obtain a clearer idea of the earlier buildings over which they are placed. Doubtless such a course is unavoidable, but it is a pity none the less. For although compared with the early House of Bel they are mere relics of yesterday and have no such associations as cling around the famous temple, they do possess an undoubted interest and fascination of their own. Ruined and half excavated, they are still singularly impressive, and bear remarkable testimony to the energy and skill of the practical people who raised them. They stand, too, for the last period of Nippur's greatness. After their fall, the site sank rapidly to insignificance, and early in the first Christian millennium the mounds became a veritable graveyard—a cemetery of dead buildings. Storm, rain, and the drifting sands did their work, and until the American expedition came with pick and shovel, the place lay silent and deserted. For over fifteen centuries the mounds knew no inhabitants save the beasts and birds of the desert, the lion, the jackal and the hyæna, the vulture and the hawk; and their solitudes were undisturbed by any human being except the passing Bedouin, the shepherds from neighbouring camps and villages, and the curiously minded traveller.

XI

"TO Bel, the king of the gods, for the house of Nippur, Gudea, *patesi* of Lagash has presented the longboat of Ekur for (the preservation of) his life." Thus ran an inscription upon a large vase discovered in the inner court of the temple, not far from the "house" of the god. And an Arab tradition has it that somewhere in the mounds is hidden "a golden *turrada*." Taken together, the two facts seem to point to the possibility of a golden boat of some kind either existing or having existed in the neighbourhood of Nippur; and I like to think that it is not utterly improbable that future excavations may bring it to light.

Certainly the tradition proves that amongst the Arabs the mounds have long been reputed as holding treasure; and under the circumstances it is only natural to surmise that a good deal of surreptitious digging must have taken place in them in past days. But the earliest excavator to attempt work at the site from a scientific point of view was Sir Henry Layard. In 1851 he spent a fortnight at Nippur, and opened trenches at many points on the mounds. But his health became impaired by the climate; and, owing to a combination of adverse

circumstances, his work at this spot was necessarily very superficial; and, naturally perhaps, in consequence the opinion he formed of the possibilities of the site was not a high one.

The American excavations have shown Niffer to be of first-class importance, and despite the blunders made, almost unavoidably, in their early days, they have deservedly attained a high place in the field of Babylonian research.

Four expeditions in all have been despatched from Philadelphia. The first, under Dr. Peters, commenced operations in February 1889. The director had been most energetic in arousing interest in the subject of Babylonian excavations and in gathering subscriptions for the work; and largely upon his recommendation Nippur was decided upon as the site of operations. After overcoming many difficulties in regard to obtaining a firman, of which he gives a lengthy account in the first volume of his book *Nippur: or Explorations and Adventures on the Euphrates*, he met his staff at Alexandretta early in December 1888, and thence travelled overland with them to Baghdad. The party consisted of the director; Dr. Harper, and Dr. Hilprecht, Assyriologists; Mr. Perez Field, architect and surveyor; Mr. Prince, secretary to Dr. Peters; Mr. Haynes (formerly a tutor at Robert College, Constantinople), photographer and business manager; and Daniel Noorian, interpreter. Mr. Prince fell ill by the way and got no farther than Baghdad, but the remainder of the party reached the mounds safely.

Owing to the delays in getting to work, the funds of the expedition were at a low ebb very soon after excavations were commenced, and it therefore speedily became apparent that the first campaign must necessarily be a short one. But it was not foreseen that it would last only some six weeks. Yet such was the case. Trouble arose with the Arabs, and culminated in an attack on the camp. The huts and tents were fired; considerable booty was carried off by the attacking party; and the work came to an abrupt conclusion, the excavators being only with difficulty extricated from a dangerous situation. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that the work accomplished was not entirely successful. The excavators had no practical experience, and no clear idea of how to deal with such a vast and complicated site. Moreover, Dr. Peters himself states that he "failed to win the confidence of his comrades," and the lack of unity in the party undoubtedly had a bad effect upon the work. And here I cannot refrain from observing that much of the failure of the early work was assuredly due to the neglect of the directors to seek the aid of specialists, or to avail themselves of it when they had the chance of so doing. To anybody who has examined the history of the excavations, it inevitably appears that personal feelings have played a most unfortunate part in their affairs. However, the subject is an unpleasant one, and I will say no more upon it.

Although Dr. Peters worked with energy and

boundless enthusiasm, he failed at several points, for the reasons given above. In fact, his energy proved positively harmful to the cause he had so much at heart. His methods of digging were erratic and spasmodic. Deeply worried, as his account of the work shows him to have been, and anxious to secure tangible results, in the shape of tablets and portable antiquities, he inaugurated a system of examining the mounds by means of deep trenches, tunnels, and shafts, which may be all very well as a means of rapidly examining into the character of a site where it is not proposed to continue excavating, but is certain to lead to disaster when pushed too far—as it was at Niffer. Moreover, in his haste, he frequently placed his dumping-grounds over portions of the mounds which had—and, in too many cases, still have—to be cleared before the nature of their contents can be properly understood, thus more than doubling the labour of his successors. Such primitive methods of working, reminding one strongly of the Arab's crude style of digging, are totally unsuited for use on mounds so extensive and complex as those of Nippur, which should be carefully "peeled" layer by layer, each stratum being thoroughly examined and planned in turn, and then entirely removed (wherever necessary), in order to lay bare the lower one.

In Philadelphia, however, the results of the first season's work were considered sufficiently encouraging to warrant the despatch of a second expedition the next season; and Dr. Peters was

again appointed director, being given a free hand in the selection of his staff.

In view of the experiences of the first season, it might appear natural that on his second venture the director would desire all the assistance he could obtain; but, although Dr. Hilprecht and Mr. Field both offered their services without a salary, he decided to take only Mr. Haynes and Noorian. The party was in the field about fifteen weeks, and the original system of scrappy excavations at numerous points, by means of tunnels, shafts, and irrational trenches, was carried gaily forward. The results of this short-sighted policy naturally were that the confusion at the mounds was rendered greater than ever, and, excepting for the tablets and similar finds which the party secured, it did quite as much harm as good.

These two campaigns certainly served a useful purpose in accustoming the Arabs of the district to the presence of the foreigner in their midst, and teaching them that in the long-run it was better to work for him than to seek to drive him from the country. Undoubtedly, too, they showed the possibilities of the site and kept alive enthusiasm in the cause; while the tablets secured proved of high value, and many of the important buildings were examined sufficiently to demonstrate what interesting discoveries might be expected to reward intelligent investigation. Their director felt that the work of the two seasons "had opened the door into a very treasure chamber, full of the most ancient records of the world," and he warmly

advocated the despatch of another expedition to carry it on. He recommended that Mr. Haynes should be placed in charge of the work, and that excavations should be carried on through the summer months as well as in the cool season. After some delay his propositions were agreed to, and Mr. Haynes went out alone, arriving at the mounds in March of 1893. To face the heat of summer it was absolutely necessary for him to have a permanent house instead of the reed tents and huts which had sufficed for the needs of the earlier party, and accordingly, upon a level spot to the south of the mounds, he built a house, which has since been enlarged from time to time as occasion required.

Haynes' determination and endurance in facing the hardships of the climate and the wiles of the Arabs, and in carrying on the work under such difficult circumstances, command ungrudging admiration. But, unfortunately, in the work of excavating, he followed the disastrous methods inaugurated by Dr. Peters; and as a consequence dump-heaps grew to alarming proportions upon parts of the mounds that should have been kept clear at all costs; many clues of value were removed and lost for ever; and in certain portions of the site (notably in the mounds to the west of the Shatt en-Nil) there now exist networks of tunnels which are a source of positive danger not only to future workers, but to the remains of early buildings of high importance.

After carrying on the work single-handed for

over a year, Mr. Haynes returned to Baghdad, under the impression that the digging was to be temporarily abandoned owing to lack of funds; but on arrival there he found a cable awaiting him, instructing him to return to the mounds, which he did. Most fortunately for his own sake and that of the work, while in Baghdad he met a young American architect, Mr. Meyer, who was returning by the overland route from India to the coast, but very readily agreed to turn aside to Niffer in order to study the architecture there and assist his fellow-countryman. The value of such an assistant at a time when the temple area was being explored can hardly be overestimated; and the benefit of companionship in his exile was an unspeakable blessing to Mr. Haynes, whose previous loneliness in such (to him) uncongenial surroundings had undoubtedly told seriously upon his health and his power of doing justice to the work. But a fresh trouble, and a singularly trying one, soon arose for him. The climate proved too much for the health of the new recruit; and although Meyer struggled on bravely with his work for a time, he was finally forced by a severe attack of fever to return to Baghdad, where he died shortly after his arrival. Left to himself again, and deeply depressed by the sad loss of Meyer, Haynes still stood to his guns; but the strain told heavily upon him; and when Mr. Duncan and I arrived at Niffer we were both impressed by his very obviously nervous condition. How much of his worry was caused by an exag-

THE PLAIN AT NIFFER, WITH EXCAVATED PART OF THE CITY WALL.

gerated idea of the treachery of the Arabs, which was due largely to alarmist reports spread by interested parties, I do not pretend to say; but it is a fact that we found him in a thoroughly depressed state, and seemingly bordering on prostration. It is highly probable that his state of anxiety accounted for his extraordinary action in turning us back from the place after all the trouble we had been to, and the expense incurred, in reaching the work.

Very naturally his decision on this matter caused considerable dissatisfaction in Philadelphia, and gave rise to certain misunderstandings. Dr. Peters, in the preface to *Nippur*, writes: "Unfortunately the person chosen for this work (*i.e.* 'to take up Dr. Haynes' work as he laid it down') allowed himself to be turned back, . . . by the report of the danger and difficulty of the task." Now "the person chosen" was, of course, Mr. Duncan; and I take this opportunity of putting it on record that to the best of my belief he was not only willing, but even extremely anxious to stay at Niffer, and quite prepared to face the "danger and difficulty of the task." Indeed, his disappointment at losing the chance of proving his metal (which I am perfectly convinced he would have done in a thoroughly satisfactory manner), and his chagrin at having no opportunity of doing anything in return for the expense to which the committee had been put in getting us both to the site, were very great. Personally, I was eager to remain, and I expressed my willingness to do so both

before leaving the country and after my arrival at home. Dr. Peters' statement, therefore, hardly gives a correct view of the case. Dr. Hilprecht puts the matter in a very different light. He says: "Much to our astonishment and regret, Haynes did not find it advisable to execute the instructions of his committee, but induced the two young men, after they had spent a few days at the ruins, to return with him to Europe." To this I have nothing to add, excepting that "induced" seems to me hardly a strong enough word to use; for, under my contract, I had no option in the matter; and as I understood Mr. Duncan's position, he was in a similar case. So that the feelings of astonishment and regret of the committee were fully shared by "the two young men." I have thought it advisable to put this matter quite clearly, because so much confusion over it seems to have arisen amongst those persons who have taken an interest in the affairs of the expedition. I need only add that personally I have been treated always with the utmost kindness and consideration by the committee, and that during my anxious time in Baghdad, after my illness, both Mr. E. W. Clark, the chairman, and Dr. Hilprecht wrote to me in an extremely kind way and cleared away all my doubts and difficulties very speedily.

Of the fourth expedition I have already given an account. Its start was not fortunate, but after Dr. Hilprecht's arrival things improved in a marked manner, and his study of the site served to put the whole of the work upon a sure footing.

Although he has given such a clear account of the excavations, and one which may be regarded as the first authoritative statement upon the subject, it appears to me that Professor Hilprecht has hardly done himself justice over the matter. To one who has worked under him, and had an opportunity of comparing his precise methods with the clumsy ones of his predecessors, it is difficult to understand his silence in face of the ridiculous criticism to which he has been subjected both in America and Europe. For the plain fact of the matter is that it is he, and he alone, who has saved the work from complete failure; and thanks to him its future success appears to be assured; whereas, had he not visited the site, it is almost certain that the haphazard methods of excavation would have been continued until the mounds were reduced to a condition of utter incomprehensibility. As soon as he arrived, he inspired in us a feeling that a strong man had taken the helm, and one, too, who knew how to steer us all to success. Finding the work in a state of confusion, and with only a few weeks in which to snatch success from the chaos of the mounds, he never utterly despaired; although I know full well that he frequently felt inclined to sit upon the summit of Bint el-Amir and gnash his teeth over the ruins before him. His cheerfulness and enthusiasm encouraged us, and we all laboured early and late with a good will, buoyed up with a hope of success, which I, for one, had certainly not experienced before at Nippur.

Of course, there still remains much to be done by future expeditions, even in those portions of the mounds which have been most thoroughly examined. The dump-heaps must be cleared right away from the ruins: and that in itself will be a work of months, even with the assistance of the light railway which is to form a part of the equipment of the next expedition. But guided by the experience acquired in the past, there can be no doubt that the future work will go forward with a swing; and by the time that the Baghdad railway is completed and ready to convey tourists to within an easy march of the mounds, we may hope that the old city will be swept and garnished, ready to receive them.

That will be a great day for the traveller who hankers after a sight of "old ruins." For he will be able to satisfy his taste to the full amongst buildings that were falling to decay before Abraham went forth from the neighbouring city of Ur "to go into the land of Canaan." True, he may find the said buildings monotonous in colour, but he need only climb to the top of the *ziggurat* in order to find relief for his eyes from the muddy brown walls and pavements.

I do not know whether the view from this point looks better on a hazy day or a clear, but under either condition it is a fine one in its own level way.

On a hazy day, when the mists cling softly in the hollows, you seem to be looking across a land which is wrapped in a cloak to protect its hoary

head from your criticising modern gaze. Beneath your feet the sombre brown of the mounds is relieved by dashes of green grass, and just beyond lies a belt of softly grey brushwood. To right and left yellow sand in level patches and furrowed dunes, with a small camp of dark brown tents on a miniature green oasis, and broken here and there by the darker patches of cultivated land, stretches away to the misty horizon, where two small blots of villages can just be made out, thanks to their *meftools*. But there are no trees in this direction—the north. For them you must turn to the south and south-west, where masses of indigo and almost black purples mark their position. Here, too, the canals and marshes lie, pale grey under a pearly sky. Occasionally the report of a distant shot, muffled by the vapours, comes floating up to your ears, or the song of a shepherd boy, who is tending his flock of black and brown sheep at the foot of the mounds, reaches you faintly. The smoke of the camp-fires hangs low over the reed huts, almost hiding them from view. The whole scene is soothing and peaceful.

Equally charming is the prospect on a bright day, with just a little atmosphere about it. Then the villages, both near and distant, loom largely. The sand-dunes tone down, but others appear where yesterday was nothing but purple shade; and trees that were hidden by the haze now stand out clearly against the perfect sky, which is flecked with cloudlets, fleecy white and the cleanest of greys. Curiously, the greens look less vivid, although the

mounds themselves take on a brighter aspect. In the distance lie rich reds and browns, in place of the purple haze. Far away, towards the Euphrates, some tall palms, their stems slender almost to the point of invisibility, tell of cultivation upon the river's bank; and by Hajji Tarfa's village and the market the date orchards stand out boldly. In the west an isolated *meftool* looks black against its background of golden sand; and in the east, scarce noticeable against the sky, is a faint suggestion of pink, which may be the mountains upon the Persian frontier. There is, too, a mirage-like effect which shows some distant mounds in the north-west floating above the horizon like ships at sea.

Yes; it is worth a journey to the mounds for a sight of the country from Bint el-Amir, whether you care greatly for the ruins or not. And if the reader only waits long enough he will be able to reach the place in comfort by means of the promised railway.

Then mayhap he will be conducted over the place by some of our old workmen—dressed, it is to be hoped, in a more seemly style than they were when they toiled with *turria* and *zambeel* at the work. They will show him "the sights," and will tell him of the work and the workers; of the finding of the "golden tomb," and the manner in which the different "Begs" went about the business of excavating. And the names of Peters, of Haynes, and of Hilprecht will be spoken with respect and seemly pride, as of men who worked hard for a worthy object—that advancement of knowledge, for which

the *firenghi* strives with such strange earnestness. And if the Arab finds his listener sympathetically inclined he will tell him also of the kindness which he received at the hands of the "Beg," and the improvement in his lot which was wrought by the foreigner.

"It was a good work," he will say. And he will speak the simple truth. It was a good work, and one with which the present writer is proud to have been associated.

XII

OUR camp lay to the south of the mounds, where Mr. Haynes had erected the house of which mention has been made in the preceding chapter. By the local Arabs this building was dubbed "the castle," a title which it certainly deserved better than those insignificant structures of the sheikhs that usually claimed it. Its walls were high and thick; in the lower storey there was no opening except the door, and in the upper ones only a few small windows; and the flat roof was surrounded by a battlemented parapet; so that its whole appearance was that of a fort. There was therefore some reason for the remark of one of the Affech sheikhs, after the last extension, when he observed that the building was "now an impregnable fortress." Its ground-floor was devoted to the kitchen and store-rooms, which stood round a courtyard paved with bricks of Ur-Gur and others of the old-time builders. Three open stairways led to the bedrooms of the staff, the Commissioner and the servants, to more store-rooms, in which the choicest specimens of the *anticas* were kept, and to a photographic dark-room.

Mr. Haynes, who always regarded the local

HUT BUILDING AT NIFFER; OUR HOUSE IN BACKGROUND.

Arabs with lively suspicion, had issued strict orders that none of them were to enter the house on any pretext whatever; and the better to carry out his wishes he employed an Indian doorkeeper, believing that he would be less likely to fraternise with the *autochthonoi* than would a Baghdadi. Even the *zaptiehs* were not allowed to show their noses within the place. For their accommodation a small building, which we called "the guard-house," was erected opposite the entrance to the castle. Two of them usually slept on a raised platform outside the door at night, while the doorkeeper slept in the porch. Sometimes, when Mr. Haynes deemed it advisable to take extra precautions, some of the most trustworthy of our Hillah workmen were brought in as night-watchmen, a fresh pair taking a turn every night.

The great drawback to this rigorous system of excluding all local people from the house was that we had no place in which we could receive distinguished visitors, and as a consequence the sheikhs did not care to call upon us often. On the rare occasions when they did come, they were usually received outside the building, carpets and cushions being placed for their reception upon the platform already spoken of, but the arrangement was never satisfactory. Towards the close of the work, after Dr. Hilprecht's arrival, some of the more favoured amongst them were received in the porch. When the next expedition gets to work, it is intended that a proper guest-house shall be erected, apart from the castle, after the custom of

the country; and such a step is sure to result in the establishing of more cordial relations with the sheikhs, with whom a little courtesy and hospitality have great weight.

The question of procuring a good supply of drinking-water had been a serious one to Mr. Haynes when he went to Niffer, for whenever the Arabs wished to annoy him they would dam up the small canal from which he drew his supply. He overcame the difficulty by digging wells near the house; but they speedily became fouled by the insanitary habits of the people of the camp; and it was not until he dug a large well and, after lining it with brickwork, covered its top nearly in, that he obtained a tolerably safe supply. During the last campaign, this well was cleaned out and connected by an underground pipe with a pump set up in the courtyard; and when the top had been completely covered in again, we found the water quite good and sweet. But as we had seen and killed a large snake in the well while it was being cleaned, we could never quite fancy the water, although it was always boiled before we used it.

The work of the house was done entirely by men, but Mrs. Haynes had an Armenian girl, Marak, to wait upon her. Mustapha acted as steward of the household, and under his directions were two bright Arab boys and a couple of Christians. When Dr. Hilprecht joined us he brought Shammo as his servant and dragoman. I was delighted to see the old fellow, and he used often to help me at my surveying. The Turkish Commissioner, Abd

el-Kader Effendi, had a native Christian, Daoud, for his servant, who attended to all his wants and cooked for him; but, while he was at Niffer, Daoud passed as a Mohammedan, and was called by a name I have forgotten. The Commissioner was punctilious in the performance of his duties, but he never made himself unpleasant about them. He was popular with all of us and with the men; and we thought ourselves fortunate in having such an agreeable Commissioner. In the evenings he liked to come to my room for a chat. He spoke English fairly well, and as he was well informed I used to enjoy the conversations with him very much, and picked up from him much information concerning the country and the Arabs.

Around the castle were clustered the reed huts of our Hillah workmen and their families. Many of these men had served with the expedition from the days of Dr. Peters, and as their interests lay far more with us than with the local Arabs, they might be relied upon to stand by us in time of need. All the foremen were chosen from their ranks, and many of them had become fairly expert in the work of digging. They were slightly more civilised and much more amenable to discipline than the Affech Arabs, and served to give balance to the body of workers as a whole. Local men might come and go as the fit took them, but the Hillah men stuck steadily to their employment. Their dwellings were extremely primitive, formed of matting and thatch, and generally with only a single low opening to serve as door, window, and chimney combined.

Scattered amongst the hovels were numbers of bread-baking ovens built of mud and clay; the camp was always littered with pestles and mortars and rude hand-mills for pounding and grinding corn; and in the warm weather palm-bough bedsteads (*sereers*) covered with flimsy mosquito curtains, standing by many of the huts, marked the residence of some Sybaritic foreman. In fact, the life of the people was passed very much in the open air at all times, which was not to be wondered at considering the cramped dimensions of the huts themselves and their state of filth and disorder.

A few of the men kept sheep or goats, which were tethered between the huts; here and there a donkey hobbled over the cooking pots; lean, active, and vociferous fowls ran wild over the place, picking up a precarious living as best they might; and the camp had its own pack of pariahs, not one whit less clamorous or cowardly than their fellows in other parts of the East. In the castle were kept a pair of fine boarhounds, "Cerberus" and "Queenie," together with a litter of puppies with which Queenie presented the expedition shortly after its arrival at Niffer. When any of the little dogs managed to get outside the building the pariahs always made a fierce assault on them; but if either of the bigger animals appeared the cowardly brutes always took to flight at once.

Mr. Haynes took out the boarhounds to act as auxiliary guards, and their ferocious aspect had a good effect on the Arabs. Cerberus was a particularly savage brute, and had to be kept constantly

muzzled and chained up; but his reputation spread far and near, and as the Arabs believed that he roamed the premises at night unmuzzled, the fear of his fangs no doubt sufficed to deter them from all thoughts of robbing the place. One of the sheikhs who visited us once asked to see the "large dog." When Cerberus was brought out, tugging at his chain and nearly pulling Kirkbesh off his feet, the Arab looked him over wonderingly and then remarked: "No, no; I have seen dogs before, but this is no dog. What is it, truly? A lion?"

The guard supplied by the Government—but paid for by the expedition—consisted of six *zaptiehs*, one being a corporal. Each batch usually remained about six months, when they were relieved from Diwaniyeh. Each member of our party was supposed to be attended by one *zaptieh* and one of the Arab guards, who were supplied by the neighbouring sheikhs in turn. Although the whole business was rather farcical, we found our "protectors" very useful to carry our instruments and so forth, and their tales of local officialdom were frequently amusing enough. The *zaptiehs*, poor fellows, were constantly complaining of their pay being in arrears, frequently for eight or nine months, and sometimes for nearly two years; and their uniforms were generally ragged and threadbare, their rifles of a most antiquated pattern, and their bandoliers all but empty of cartridges. As a rule, they were very orderly and got on well with the workmen, but I doubt whether they would have

been so if they had been free to do as they liked. As it was, they knew very well that any attempt to bully or impose upon the people would result in their being sent packing in a hurry ; and they liked being at Niffer because they received their pay regularly, besides occasional perquisites of one sort or another.

On week-days the camp woke about an hour and a half before sunrise. We had breakfast by lamp-light, and were usually out on the mounds in time to see the sun come up over the edge of the plain. In the grey dawn the camp and mounds looked their worst, and the sleepy men, wrapped up against the chill morning air, were listless and subdued ; but the sun soon drove away the cheerlessness and put life into everything, and the early hours were the best of the day.

If we were going to survey or measure up any part of the ruins, we usually had a boy, or sometimes two, to help us, who would join us at the porch and take our belongings for us. There, too, would be the guard and *zaptiehs*, who saluted and fell in behind us. As we passed them, the gangs of men would call to us "*naharak said, Beg*," and if anything of interest had been turned up the foreman would come bustling up, full of importance to show it to us, and tell us all about it with much gesticulation and minute description of its position when discovered.

A gang consisted of from twenty to thirty men. Each foreman had a pick (brought from America), which was regarded as a kind of emblem of office.

He did the heavy work in loosening the soil, and was expected to look out carefully for stray objects of interest and to avoid cutting into walls, or breaking any jar or coffin which might be in the ground. His "scrapers" plied their *turrias* (hoes) in breaking up the large clods and scraping the loose soil into the baskets. As each basket was filled it was seized by its carrier, hoisted on to his thigh, adjusted with a jerk and borne away up the slope to be emptied at the head of the dump-heap. If the tip was a long one, the number of basket-carriers had to be increased in order to keep the scraper-men busy, and each carrier would have two baskets, one of which he would leave to be filled while he was carrying the other away. Often the light-hearted fellows sang at their work, and as they trotted back to get their empty baskets refilled they sometimes started a chorus. The foremen kept their gangs well up to the mark upon the whole, although, I fear, they were not all so reliable as Mr. Haynes supposed them to be. At noon work was knocked off for an hour or more, according to the time of year, and then the men ate their simple lunch, and smoked or slept as they felt inclined. Each man was supposed to have his own supply of drinking-water, a regulation rendered necessary by the frequent quarrels that used to arise over disputes caused by one man using another's jar. As a rule, two or three men shared a jar, which was carried out by one of the boys. By the evening they were tired out, and looked eagerly for the signal to stop work, and as soon as it was given,

a yell of satisfaction went up from two hundred dusty, thirsty throats.

A few of the men took an intelligent interest in the work, one or two of the older hands being adepts in following out clues; and in the way of determining the use of articles discovered they frequently gave us hints, thanks to the conservatism of the country and its customs. But in such delicate work as cleaning out a burial, not one of them could hold a candle to half-a-dozen of Professor Petrie's trained men. They were like so many overgrown children in many ways. When the work was going well they would skylark and skip about, but in wet or gloomy weather they became dismal and rather inclined to sulk if spoken to sharply. Fortunately it rarely happened that we had rain enough to stop the work; but even a slight shower made the labour of climbing up and down the slippery slopes difficult, and the rain seemed to wash out all the spirit from even the best workers. In dry and windy weather, on the other hand, I often wondered that every one of the men did not suffer from ophthalmia, for the dust was indescribable, and when a sandstorm from the desert came up to complicate matters, it was impossible to see a foot before you.

Many of the men did suffer from their eyes, and every evening a score or more of them would come to the house for an eye-wash, or for some other medicine for themselves or their families. Like all their kind, they believed in the medicine given them in proportion to the violence of its action. For, after a dose enough to kill a couple of

A HILLAH WORKMAN AT NIFFER: NASIR EL-HUSSEIN.

Europeans, an Arab will come up smiling to say that the *dowah* is very good and he wants more of it. I acquired a cheap reputation as a learned *hakim* on the strength of a cough mixture I made up, and through a distribution of quinine pills and chlorodyne; and one of the *zaptiehs*, whom I treated to a course of toddy to break up a bad cold, was loud in his praises of the *firenghi's* medicine. Frequently Arabs from distant villages tramped over to us for doctoring, and when Dr. Sturrock and a doctor of the Busreh Medical Mission visited us, every man, woman, and child for miles around was anxious for treatment, and those who had no complaint manufactured one for the occasion, convinced that such a chance of gratuitous advice from real *hakims* was too good to be missed. One man wanted ingrowing eyelashes removed, and was hugely delighted when the little operation was performed; others were troubled with chronic coughs and colds; while many sought a charm that would preserve them from all sickness.

But the most amusing case of a miraculous cure was that of Abd el-Zoar, and was wrought by Mr. Haynes and the Commissioner. The patient was a queer character, the butt of his fellows, half-witted and yet sufficiently cunning to try innumerable dodges to escape hard work. His favourite plan was to sham illness, and he did it so well that for a long time he received care and consideration above the other men. But at last it was observed that his sickness usually fell upon him at times when the work was particularly unpleasant; his

foreman reported him as incorrigibly lazy, and declared that he was malingering; and a permanent cure for his complaint was decided upon.

One day, when the ground was slippery and there was a severe dust-storm, Abd el-Zoar was seized with extraordinary pains in his interior, and finally, after a game struggle to go on working, he collapsed. His kind-hearted foreman, who had been expecting an attack of the kind, ordered some of the gang to escort the poor sufferer up to the shelter-house upon the *ziggurat* where the "Beg" was sitting. With much toil—for the sick man was heavy and the way was steep—the journey was accomplished, and the patient was deposited in the outer room of the shelter amongst the *zaptiehs* and guards. The Commissioner, who was in the know, hastened to tell the trouble to Mr. Haynes, who lost no time in examining the interesting case. Besides being very sore, as a result of having been dropped once or twice by his sympathetic bearers, the patient had awful pains tearing at his vitals, which he described in graphic terms. Everybody present expressed sympathy in such extravagant terms that the poor wretch began to imagine that he really was ill; and when Mr. Haynes, after looking at his tongue, feeling his pulse, and prodding him vigorously, shook his head gravely, the Arab was genuinely alarmed. Abd el-Kader, who was interpreting, had a keen sense of humour, and he took care that the patient should know that the medicine which was to be administered to him was remarkably powerful and compounded of drugs which even

the *firenghis* seldom used. "You are nearly dead, Abd el-Zoar," he said, "but after this wonderful medicine you will never again feel like this." The sick man groaned and murmured that the "Beg" was very good and even as a father to him; the spectators broke into a chorus of praise for the "Beg's" skill; and the Commissioner retired to assist in the preparation of the draught. It is to be feared that many of its ingredients are not to be found in the Pharmacopœia, but most of them are household words. There was a beautiful blend of red and black ink, of paste and of gum, of rhubarb pill and castor-oil, with a dash of any other handy stuff which was likely to assist the mixture. It was a thick treacly concoction, and there was plenty of it. After the first taste the sufferer declared that he felt better already and would save the rest for future use; but the Commissioner insisted that he should drink it all immediately, and with wonderful grimaces he obeyed. "Now I will go home," he remarked, as he tried to sidle off. "No; it is the 'Beg's' order that you remain here," replied Abd el-Kader, "and the *zaptiehs* will look after you." With alacrity the *zaptiehs* declared that they would see to him, and so poor Abd el-Zoar sat huddled up against the wall, fighting an overpowering nausea for half an hour. Then he rose suddenly, with the strength of despair escaped from those who would have detained him, and rushed into the air. A sadder and wiser man he sought his home, and in the evening he killed a sheep as a thank-offering. Never again was he troubled with his strange

complaint. The incident was a wonderful proof of the knowledge of the West in affairs medical.

To assist us in our surveys Mr. Haynes used to send us such boys as could best be spared from the trenches. Some were quick to learn what was wanted of them, others were desperately aggravating. One of them had a remarkably correct eye for setting out a right angle. Times out of number he surprised me by taking an offset for me with perfect accuracy at the first glance; and what added to my perplexity was that when I tried to find out how he did it he could not tell me, and had no idea what a right angle was. Only "it looked right"—and it always was right too. Our pursuit of accuracy usually struck our assistants as a waste of energy during the early days of the apprenticeship; but the last helper we had was most painstaking and conscientious. He was named Nasir el-Hussein, had been trained by a mullah of Hillah, and was always spoken of by his Hillah friends as "*mullah* Nasir." His religion was a very real thing to him, but he was not fanatical, and his thirst for knowledge was quite abnormal. At the close of the work, he went to America with Mr. Fisher. He proved wonderfully faithful, honest and well behaved, and made friends for himself wherever he went; but he very often felt lonely; and as there were several postponements of the start of the next expedition, he was sent back to his own country, where doubtless he has a reputation as a great traveller.

Our people had few diversions. The work was

too pressing. But now and again they indulged in a dance or chorus—a *hoseh*,—and occasionally a strolling musician, or some vagabond troupe of players, would halt before the castle and give a performance.

Once when we had been to visit Hajji Tarfa, the Hillah men turned out *en masse* to welcome us upon our return. As we neared the camp, they gathered round us and commenced a *hoseh*.

First a single voice chanted a line—

"Ya Beg, Allah taw'l el omrak,"

which may be translated—"Oh master, God prolong your life." Several voices took it up and repeated it many times. Then came another line, "Oh 'Beg,' we live in the shadow of your protection," which was repeated in a like manner; and thus, with slight variations of wording, the chant continued, the crowd around us increasing momentarily, and every man and boy joining lustily in the chorus. The voices were not musical, but the Arab has an instinctive ear for time and rhythm, and upon the whole the effect was far from unpleasing. Some of the men accompanied the chant with hand-clapping, others fired blank charges of strong-smelling powder into the air or on to the ground, and all of them marked time with a peculiar hopping step. By the time we reached the house every soul in the camp had joined the procession. Guns were being fired off with an unwonted disregard for powder wasted, women were uttering their shrill cries, and all the children and dogs were joining in

the racket. When we entered the house, the men prepared for a grand dance in front of the building, and we hastened up to the roof, whence we had a fine view of the performance.

All the men formed into ranks and started a short-step march, chanting about "the Beg" and the work meanwhile. They would advance a few yards in one direction, then face about, all together, and go the other way. After a few minutes of this sort of business they formed into a ring. Some thirty men joined hands to form a circle for the chief dancers, the rest clustered round them, about five rows deep, and behind them stood the women and children.

The dance was commenced by the men who formed the ring swaying their bodies first to one side then to the other. At first they moved slowly, but as they warmed to the work they swayed faster and faster, and at length they began to circle round the clear space, still holding hands or placing their hands upon their neighbours' shoulders or round their waists. Next there stepped into the ring Hussein Amaran, a slim, active young fellow. Chanting some rough verses at the expense of one or another of the men, and firing off his gun frequently, he swayed and hopped round the circle. Soon he was joined by a very much older man, a foreman named Abud el-Gumbar. The pair went through a little sham-fight, and Abud skipped about in a manner quite surprising in a man of his age. Then another foreman, Chakuri, joined them. He was always a comical character, and as soon as

he was in the ring the dance became very quaint. He brandished his gun and dagger furiously, and jerking his body derisively commenced a mock defiance of Hussein. The latter responded suitably, and the fun grew fast and furious. Entering heartily into the spirit of the thing, each spectator cheered on Hussein or Chakuri, as his fancy dictated, to fresh efforts. Both performers had fine powers of mimicry, and it was amusing to notice how well they hit off each other's expressions and idiosyncrasies. Chakuri had a natural squint, which Hussein copied to the life; and in return Chakuri made capital out of his rival's rather austere looks and haughty bearing, and gave a most telling burlesque of his methods of work in the trenches. It was all given and taken in good part by both men, and the spectators laughed equally heartily at both of them, and applauded each point scored by either. Another foreman soon joined in, carrying a long scimitar, which he brandished in Chakuri's face, declaring that he was a more suitable opponent for such a "warrior" than the "lad" Hussein. A fifth performer went through a pantomimic representation of a sick person, holding his head, groaning, rolling his eyes about, and clutching convulsively at his stomach. He hit off the expression of pain in a most perfect manner, and although the subject was hardly a suitable one for merriment according to English notions, it was impossible to keep from laughing at his droll expressions. All through the show some of the men in the circle kept up a humming tune, one of

them imitating the sound of the native violin, while another gave a capital copy of the droning Arab pipes; and now and again all of them caught up a bit of a chant. The dance broke up as it had begun, with a hopping "march" to and fro.

One of the most popular subjects for burlesque is the extravagant display of grief which the women make whenever anybody is sick. In the luncheon hour I once saw two dust-begrimed basket-carriers give a performance of this kind for the amusement of their fellows. One of the actors lay stretched on the ground, impersonating a sick child; while the other bent over him, stroking his head, lavishing extravagant endearments upon him, and wailing loudly in the most approved style of the women. Occasionally the "mother" would slip in a bit of chaff at the other's expense, or would pummel him vigorously, when the invalid always became restive and had to be sat upon. The fellow who was acting the mother's part did it to perfection, tearing his hair, beating his breast and rolling his eyes in a perfect frenzy of despair. Suddenly, after a particularly severe punching, the child recovered in a remarkable manner, whereupon the mother sprang up and demonstrated her joy by an uncouth dance, slapping her thighs and declaring that "now she would be the mother of many more children."

On the afternoon of Christmas Day a "wandering minstrel," who might very truly have been described as "a thing of shreds and patches," came to the camp. He was an intelligent-looking youth, with a dash of the negro about him, unless

his complexion belied him; and he carried a one-stringed fiddle, of a singularly crude pattern, upon which he accompanied himself while he sang.

The song was a very long one. It told how the singer had seen "an altogether lovely lady" on her way to the bath, "accompanied by her slaves and black eunuchs"; how he had fallen hotly in love with her; how she had looked kindly upon him, "with a glance which drove all sense from his mind," so that he fell down swooning; how he had pined for her and sought in vain to drive away thought of her by "drinking much wine"; how the fair one, who had been equally smitten with love for the handsome (!) youth, managed to open communications with him; and how the pair came together at last and "enjoyed much happiness" in one another's society. But through the treachery of a jealous slave-girl, whose advances had been rejected by the fascinating troubadour, the lovers were betrayed to the outraged husband of the lady. He—of course!—was a highly placed personage, who was not to be trifled with. His wrath fell swiftly upon the lovely lady; and the musician only saved himself by instant flight. Lovelorn he wandered "all over the earth," seeking a maid to replace his lost fair. But there, even as he sang, he saw before him a pair of bright eyes that set his heart afire. Surely their lovely possessor would take pity upon his wretchedness!

Such was the tale unfolded to an audience consisting largely of staid matrons and tiny children, although I must add that I have toned it down

very considerably. That the listeners appreciated it was very evident from the liberal applause they bestowed upon it. It appeared that the artist was improvising, and he readily accepted suggestions offered by the bystanders, working them into the thread of his story with much adroitness. Throughout the song he squatted on the ground, holding his fiddle so that its point rested upon the earth between his knees, and playing a droning accompaniment which never ceased for an instant.

The next day, at noon, when we returned to the house from the mounds, we found a large troupe outside the door. Probably they had heard of the liberal *backsheesh* the other musician had earned, and hoped to do as well or better for themselves. In the party there were three musicians, two carrying one-stringed violins, and one a *dimbuk*; a raconteur, who seemed to be their leader and acted as master of the ceremonies; a dancing boy in full toggery; and a little bit of a girl about nine or ten years old. The boy wore a short Zouave jacket, a white shirt cut very baggy, a fez, and a skirt of yellow, red, and green muslin. He was about fifteen, but his face wore the expression of a particularly vicious old man. His features were of the lowest type, and he was heavily marked with smallpox scars. Altogether his appearance was most repellent. The girl wore a white dress, held in at the waist by a purple girdle which looked as if it had once upon a time had some gold embroidery upon it. She had fine silky black hair, which hung loose over her shoulders; and her face

was quite pretty; but her expression was brazen already, poor child.

When we first came within sight of them, the girl and boy were dancing; and as soon as they saw us they came skipping and gliding towards us, moving their heads slowly from side to side with a regular swaying motion and fixing a stare upon us. This is supposed to have some mesmeric effect, I believe, and to be a movement of fascination. It failed to charm our purses, however. We ignored the petitions for *backsheesh*, and retired to the house-top to see the performance.

Round a ring formed by the spectators the girl swayed, with arms poised above her head, and sometimes holding out her long, full-cut sleeves in much the same way the Spanish dancers use their scarves. With hands joined before him and held palms downwards, the boy meanwhile jerked himself about, exhibiting some agility but no grace. In fact, his dancing and acting throughout were inelegant and inclined to be suggestive. At one stage of his performance he turned a few somersaults, but not nearly as well as our own street urchins do the trick. This sort of thing went on for about five minutes, during which the musicians kept up a queer accompaniment on the fiddles and drum. Then came a short interval to rest the dancers, during which the hopeful youth seized the opportunity to borrow a cigarette from one of the *zaptiehs* who was standing by and have a smoke. Next he and the girl donned *izzars*, and he put on also a set of small clappers, which he fastened to his

thumbs and forefingers. The raconteur meanwhile kept the audience together by telling them what was to follow and treating them to a flow of banter. His calling had made him sharp at hitting off the tastes of his listeners, and his sallies were well received, even by those at whose expense they were made.

The dancers being rested, the raconteur stepped forward and began a song, while the musicians struck into a spirited accompaniment with *dimbuk*, fiddles, and cymbals. Holding their *izzars* between their teeth, so as to keep the lower parts of their faces covered, the boy and girl commenced a "walk round," twisting their bodies about in a far from elegant style. The audience quickly became excited, evidently seeing something to appreciate which was not clear to our eyes, and at length one of the women of the camp entered the ring and joined in the performance. She danced well, and the musicians encouraged her, and at the same time worked up the general enthusiasm, by quickening their tune and singing faster and faster. Both the professional dancers kept advancing towards the musicians, or towards the more effervescent members of the audience, in a sort of "invitation" step, and broad chaff began to be bandied about. At last the little girl threw her leg over the head of one of the grey-bearded fiddlers. The spectators mostly applauded her vigorously, but some of the better class openly expressed disapproval of such forwardness. The raconteur affected surprise, and was playfully indignant; but the other members of

the troupe egged the poor child on to further daring.

The next part of the entertainment was opened by the two dancers wrapping themselves completely in their cloaks and squatting on the ground near to one another. The music changed to a slower time, and the raconteur began a sing-song tale, descriptive of the troubles of a husband, who, having lost his two wives, after much searching found them seated in the market-place of the town. Putting on the air of a very superior young swell he sauntered round the ring. His affected manner went oddly with his Arab costume, but he did the thing admirably and showed genuine talent for humorous acting. Carrying a light switch in his hand, quite in the mincing style of a masher, he went the round of the spectators, explaining his predicament in a song. His tone was high and nasal, quite unlike his natural voice. Very soon he affected to gain news of his missing wives from a *zaptieh*, and stepping up to the boy he tapped him lightly upon the head with the switch, and wanted to see his face. The youth showed much indignant surprise, shook himself petulantly, then rose and shifted his position forward slightly. Then the same business was gone through with the girl. This was repeated several times, until at last the angry husband insisted upon peeping under the veils of the two ladies, when, finding his suspicions confirmed, he drove them home before him with many blows. After a few more songs and dances of a similar nature, the entertainment

broke up, and the players betook themselves off.

The women of the camp frequently got up dances of their own, generally while the men were away at work. On these occasions the "music" was supplied by one of the ladies thumping on an old and battered kerosene can with much zeal and some attention to time. The note was monotonous to a well-nigh maddening degree, but the dancers recked not. The *premiere danseuse* was the belle of the camp; and the second lady was our bread-maker, Aleeyah, an ancient dame of far from attractive appearance. The two of them used to waltz slowly round the ring, holding out their *izzars* and making use of the "fascinating" movement already described. They had remarkable powers of contortion, but their dancing was always strictly decorous—according to Arab ideas.

During the Moharrem celebrations the women gave a dance, or rather a pantomime play, representing the martyrdom of Hussein. The leading part was taken by a foreman's wife, trapped out with Mustapha's sword, a new *abba*, and a man's head-dress. She was a good actress, and moved many of her audience to tears. Another foreman's wife acted the part of the martyr's widow; and an old woman accompanied the pantomime with an explanatory recitation.

In the centre of the space set apart for the actors was placed a dish containing four candles, ashes, some clods of earth (signs of mourning, as contrasted with henna, the symbol of rejoicing), and

a few green leaves. The play represented the parting of Hussein from his wife, his setting out from home, the arrival of news of his death, his widow's mourning, and so forth. The women in the audience were genuinely affected by the story, shedding tears, beating their breasts and tearing their hair. But then their emotions can change with lightning rapidity.—Once when one of them was bewailing the death of her child, Mrs. Haynes sought to restrain some of the violence of the poor thing's grief, fearing that she would do herself an injury. The Arab woman could not understand what was said to her, but something struck her sense of humour, and she burst out laughing in the midst of her tears.

Only once did I see our people try to dance to the music of the bagpipes, and then they made a failure of it. Of course, the dances I have tried to describe were largely the efforts of amateurs; but they interested me the more for that reason; for the professionals I saw in Baghdad and elsewhere were invariably atrociously suggestive. The dances of our people and the strolling players might be crude, but at the worst propriety—Arab propriety, at any rate—was never shocked by them.

XIII

SOON after Mr. Fisher and I arrived at Niffer, the mounds were visited by a "commission" from Diwaniyeh. The incident is worth recording, if only for its absurdity.

It appears that Chokai Effendi, who had been the Commissioner at Niffer before Abd el-Kader, had always been somewhat difficult to get along with; and when he was removed from the office, he wrote a report to Constantinople in which he solemnly affirmed that the expedition had discovered "a diamond mine" lying beneath the shelter-house on top of the *ziggurat*. Doubtless the worthy gentleman had been annoyed and puzzled by the strict regulations enforced by Mr. Haynes against anybody but himself and Mrs. Haynes entering the inner room of the shelter-house, and was determined to get even with the director for what he considered the slight upon his dignity. In any case, he made his report, which resulted in telegraphic instructions being sent from Constantinople to Diwaniyeh, ordering the civil and military authorities at the latter place to investigate the truth of its statements, and if necessary to take possession of the mounds and the buildings of the expedition

ABD EL-KADER EFFENDI: OUR "COMMISSIONER."

in the name of the Sultan. Accordingly, the chief officer of police at Diwaniyeh and the officer commanding the troops in the district rode over, accompanied by a score of *zaptiehs* and soldiers, and insisted upon seeing all over the site and examining the shelter-house and the "castle." They declared that a report was current in the neighbourhood that a vast treasure (guarded by a *jinnee*, too!) had been discovered in a well or "mine," and hinted pretty plainly that they intended to secure the spoil by force if necessary. The details of the *jinnee's* appearance were circumstantial to a degree and extremely interesting. It had "eyes like plates" and enormous claws; and it seized and devoured a number of sheep which Mr. Haynes directed the workmen to lower into the mine. Then a bold workman—probably believing that the monster had taken the edge off its appetite with the mutton—had ventured down the pit "enclosed in a glass case," and had seen the treasure, which was of incalculable worth, and "shone like the noonday sun," etc. etc.

The committee of investigation examined numerous witnesses; poked its nose everywhere, being especially suspicious of the pump in the courtyard of the house; and finally had a long and important pow-wow with the trusty Mustapha.—By the way, we strongly suspected that a desire to secure the person of that much-wanted worthy was mixed up with the visit. But if such was the case, the desire was frustrated by the care with which his valuable person was guarded.

Of course, the investigation ended in smoke. The committee dined with our Commissioner, slept in our dining-room, breakfasted on scrambled eggs and sugar, and took its departure early in the morning,—not altogether empty-handed, I fancy. Abd el-Kader wrote a sarcastic letter to Constantinople, pointing out that Chokai Effendi had been present at the building of the shelter-house, and therefore should have acted earlier in the day. We heard no more of the ridiculous affair, but it afforded us all a great deal of amusement, and served to show the credulity of the official mind in a vivid manner.

Soon after this episode we paid a visit to Hajji Tarfa, and as it was typical of such outings I will give an account of it.

Our party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Haynes, Mr. Fisher, Abd el-Kader Effendi, and myself. We were accompanied by the sergeant and corporal of our *zaptiehs*, several of the foremen and chief workmen, and four of the foremen's wives—who acted as ladies-in-waiting to Mrs. Haynes. We were all dressed in gala attire to do honour to the sheikh, and our followers went about bristling with weapons.

As our way lay through the marshes, we embarked in a flotilla of small boats, which were made comfortable with a number of rugs and pillows. The craft used in the marshes deserve notice, because they afford a good example of the ingenuity displayed by the Arabs in making the best of the limited choice of material at their command. They

have different names, according to their sizes, but they are all built in much the same style. The framework is of poles and bundles of reeds, over which a thatch of reeds and matting is placed, and the exterior is thickly coated with pitch. In the smaller craft no planks are used, and even in the larger ones they play a very small part. Owing to their lightness, the boats are admirably adapted for use in the swamps, where it is often necessary to make a porterage or to force a way through reedy shallows. The smallest kind is called *chelabieh*, and is meant for the use of only one person, or at most two. It is usually propelled by means of a *gherafa* (paddle). Next is the *turrada*, then the *meshoof*, and then the *dann(a)q*, all of them managed by a long pole (called a *murdi*), shod with a hard knob of pitch. In shallow water the *murdi* is used as a punting pole, and in crossing from bank to bank, or in deep water, it is used in the same way as an oar. The boats are pointed at both ends, like a canoe, and the boatmen stand one at either end, or sometimes run along the narrow gunwale—in a surprisingly clever way considering the crankiness of their craft—thrusting their way along the banks. When travelling against the current, or if very heavily laden, the boats are usually tracked by one man, while the other steers with a short paddle, the tow-rope being secured either to a short mast or to the *murdi* fastened to the thwarts mast-wise.

The journey to Hajji Tarfa's village occupied about two hours and a half, and took us through parts of the marshes where water-fowl swarmed

and fish were abundant. The water was so clear that it was easy to see the fish darting about, or lying by the roots of the great rushes, and our workmen speared many of them, showing much skill in the work. The sheikh's village was a pretty place, boasting a number of shrubs and trees—willows, ash, and some varieties unknown to me. On the walls of some of the gardens I noticed the skulls of buffaloes and cows fastened, which, Abd el-Kader told me, were put up as charms against the evil eye.

From the landing-place we made our way up a little lane, which was carpeted with rich green grass and flanked with willows, young palms, and palm-leaf fences, until we came to the *muthif*. This was a good specimen of the guest-houses of those parts, clean and in excellent repair. It was built of reed mats stretched over horseshoe-shaped hoops (called *haneeza*). These hoops are formed by tying together bundles of reeds—thick at their base and tapering upwards—which are driven into the ground at equal distances from one another in two parallel rows. When a sufficient number have been planted, the tops of each pair are drawn inwards until they meet, when they are neatly spliced and securely bound with ropes of reeds. The mat covering is next secured over the framework (which is generally stiffened with horizontal bundles of reeds), and the building is then complete. In this particular house the entrance end was open all across, save for a lattice-work of willow poles below, and a belt of matting fitted to the curved upper

part; and the opposite end was closed with matting secured to a framework of poles. The floor was formed simply of mud trodden hard, as is usually the case; but it was covered with clean mats made of palm fronds, and a rug was spread in the place of honour. In front of the building was a raised platform, a foot above the outer ground-level, roughly semicircular on plan, and enclosed by a dwarf wall —all built of mud.

On this platform the sheikh stood to receive us. We men were presented to him by Abd el-Kader Effendi, and he shook hands with each of us in turn, inclining his head slightly as he did so. Meanwhile Mrs. Haynes was conducted to the harem building with her attendants, where they were the guests of our host's women-folk.

We were immediately ushered into the guest-house, where I had an opportunity of observing the great sheikh carefully. He was a tall man, of commanding appearance and some dignity, but his expression struck me as hard and somewhat crafty. His iron-grey whiskers and beard were heavily dyed with henna, and his complexion was remarkably pallid. He had a habit of stroking his beard in a meditative style and looking hard at one from under his bushy eyebrows. In dress he was somewhat of a dandy. He wore a dark green coat over a red-and-white striped *ziboon*, a white woollen *kefiyeh* worked with gold thread, a dark brown *'agal* of the knotted pattern affected by old gentlemen, and European patent leather shoes, which were sadly trodden down at the heels.

At first it appeared that we had arrived earlier than we were expected, as there was but one rug spread, but others were quickly brought and laid along the side of the building. Then mattresses were placed on the rugs, and pillows were piled up to serve as supports for our backs.

About a third of the way down the room from the doorway was the coffee-making place, a low mud enclosure about five feet by three feet six inches, in which a bright wood fire was burning when we entered. A little beyond it stood a portable throne-like chair, made of deal and covered with blue paper. Beside the chair was a small wooden footstool. These two articles are used by the sheikh when he is acting in his capacity as an official of the Government; and they are then placed on a small dais at the end of the chamber farthest from the door. The only other furniture in the place was the coffee-making paraphernalia, which was of a very complete description. The coffee-pots, nine in number, were quaintly shaped, with great curved lips and clumsy lids. They were made of copper tinned over, and were thickly coated with soot and smoke. The smallest was about eight inches high, and the others ranged gradually upwards until the largest was fully three feet six inches tall.

The coffee-maker was a dignified looking person, whose face indicated quite plainly that he was of negro descent. He was fully alive to the importance of his position, and went about his business with all the airs and graces of an artist;

and certainly the result of his efforts was a cup of delicious coffee. He came into the building as soon as we were seated, and set about his work at once. When the fire had subsided into a glow, he raked the embers together and set the coffee-pots upon them to warm. Next he took a handful of berries from an earthenware jar and placed them in a large iron ladle. This ladle had a very long handle and two little feet, which served to keep it raised above the fire while the berries were roasting in it. When they were properly roasted he tipped them into a large stone mortar and pounded them with a heavy stone pestle. Then he transferred the powder to the largest coffee-pot, using a flat iron spoon, of which the handle served as a poker and fire-rake. Sugar and water were added next, and, as soon as the beverage came to the boiling point, he skimmed off the froth and poured the liquor into the next coffee-pot. Thus he proceeded until the coffee had passed through all the pots to the smallest one, when it was poured into small *finjans* (coffee-cups) and presented to each visitor in turn. The dregs, it should be added, are always emptied into the largest coffee-pot and saved for future use. Very little coffee is presented to each person, just two or three teaspoonfuls at the bottom of the *finjan*; but, after drinking, the guest returns the cup to the servant, who replenishes it. This is done twice, and etiquette demands that the drinker should make some show of thoroughly enjoying the coffee; although it is not necessary to go to the length of

drawing it in with a sucking noise and smacking your lips after swallowing it, as some travellers have declared is the case.

Throughout the coffee-drinking we sat cross-legged on our rugs, exchanging compliments with our host. Abd el-Kader especially chatted volubly with him—presumably upon the affairs of state, for the two frequently exchanged lengthy whispers. Now and again a messenger would arrive, and, dropping on his hands and knees the better to reach the sheikh, would whisper mysteriously in his ear. But comparatively few visitors put in an appearance during the morning, and only twice had we to rise to our feet to honour the entry of a person of distinction.

When lunch was served, we had a very great surprise, for Hajji actually broke through the rules of the strict sect to which he belongs and sat down to eat with us—a wonderful piece of condescension for a *Shiah*. We observed that he appeared somewhat ill at ease, and regarded the village priest warily out of the corner of his eyes all the time. Nevertheless, he did dine with us, and was extremely careful to see that all our wants were supplied; and undoubtedly his conduct made a marked impression upon all the company.

First, a circular mat was brought in and spread upon the floor, just beyond the hearth. On this mat many bowls and dishes containing different viands and sweetmeats were placed; and then our host, the Effendi, Mr. Haynes, Mr. Fisher, and I squatted round it. Before eating we washed our hands over

SCENE IN HAJJI TARFA'S MUTHIF DURING OUR VISIT THERE.

a basin which was brought to each of us in turn by a servant, while a second servant poured water from a copper vessel for us. No towel was provided, so we simply let our hands dry as best they might. In the centre of the dining-mat stood a huge bowl piled high with boiled rice. There was also a dish of stewed mutton, very greasy and none too appetising, in which sheep's head was all too prominent. From this dainty dish Hajji Tarfa tore off choice morsels and personally presented them to us. As he could not conveniently reach across the mat, he threw them to us, or rather at us! Some fell on the floor, some on the mat, and some in the lap of Mr. Haynes. Politeness demanded that we should eat these fragments with the best show of relish we could muster up. It was a trying experience! Mr. Fisher who had never assisted at such a banquet before, found it especially so; and I had hard work to keep my countenance, because Abd el-Kader kept making funny remarks to him in still funnier English, and chaffing him about his poor appetite. Besides the rice and mutton, there were many other dishes; meat cakes, which were really good, *yaourt*, rice-and-milk, *helvar*, some fancy dishes whose component parts I could not guess, and excellent native bread. Each person helped himself from the dishes just as his inclination prompted him. We four guests had spoons to eat with, but, of course, Hajji used his right hand; and I must admit that he made a far better show than we did. There was nothing to drink with the meal, but as the food was all moist we did

very well without. As each person finished eating he drew away from the table, and the servants again brought water for the washing of hands. This time we had a towel, scented with saffron, to dry our hands upon. As soon as our host had finished his meal, we returned to our seats, where we had more coffee and cigarettes; and the rest of the people present fell to upon the remains of the feast in a most hearty fashion.

After the coffee and cigarettes were disposed of, Hajji carried us off to look at his garden. It was not a very grand place; but that he should have a garden at all in such unfavourable surroundings shows that he is a man of ideas above those of his fellows. One of the many marsh streams runs by the boundary of the place, and from it the water to irrigate the garden is drawn up, by means of a basket slung by ropes between two poles, and emptied into a large mat which serves as a reservoir. We saw a few apricot trees struggling hard for existence, some lemons and *noranges*; and there were also melon plants, tomatoes, lettuces, and radishes —the last named being grown from seeds supplied by the expedition. In the garden, and built against the *muthif* proper, is an arbour of trellis-work covered with creepers, which the sheikh sometimes uses as his guest-house in the summer.

While we were in the garden I asked Hajji if he would allow me to take his photograph. At first he hesitated; but after consulting Abd el-Kader he consented to stand, upon condition that Mr. Haynes was by him. To this I agreed. But the

sheikh would only pose in the shelter of the arbour, fearing to lay himself open to censure for being too affable, I suspect; and as he was extremely nervous and restless the pictures turned out failures, greatly to my disappointment.

As time was passing rapidly, and we did not wish to be on the marshes late, we prepared for departure; and word was sent to Mrs. Haynes to be ready. Before leaving we entered the guest-house again, and had more coffee, and exchanged last compliments with Hajji Tarfa, declaring that we should never forget our visit to him or the hospitality he had shown us. And, indeed, it was all sufficiently interesting for us to remember for many a day.

Mrs. Haynes had had her share of amusing experiences also, of which she gave us a lively account. Her ignorance of Arabic unfortunately prevented her making such full use of her unique opportunity for studying a Mesopotamian harem as she might otherwise have done; but with the alertness on which the American woman plumes herself, she kept her eyes open; and whatever there was to see she saw. The harem is enclosed by a mud wall with a circular fort at each corner, and is entered through a wide gateway, which is closed by a pair of heavy wooden gates studded with copper nails. Immediately to the left as you enter the compound, lies the *mutbuk* (kitchen), a small mud hovel with a raised hearth; behind it is a low shed which is used as a store and washing place; and still farther back, in the angle of the enclosure, is a larger building, a general storehouse.

On the right is a long, low room, devoted to the use of the servants, and the principal apartments are at the south end of the enclosure. Behind the servant's room is a cellar-like chamber, where stand the large earthenware jars that hold the water supply for the household. From the courtyard a flight of six steps gives access to a terrace, enclosed by a screen of trellis-work, from which the chief room is reached through a kind of antechamber. In this room the ladies of Hajji's harem pass most of their time, and it was there that Mrs. Haynes was received. To her its crudeness appealed with all the interest of novelty; but according to her account it must be a poor place to pass one's life in, and the lot of the sheikh's wives can hardly be an enviable one.

The *salon* is some sixteen feet long, by twelve wide, and about twelve high. The floor is of mud trodden hard; the walls are mud; and the roof is formed of undressed palm logs, over which reed mats are stretched and a thick covering of brush-wood and mud is placed. The anteroom previously mentioned is cut off by a screen of woodwork five feet high, which stands on a dwarf wall of mud. The "decorations" of the apartment are sufficiently curious to merit description. All the walls are ornamented with bits of broken glass and crockery, such as bottle ends, pieces of china plates, cups, saucers, and lamps, which are bedded in the mud plastering. The room is lit by very small windows, placed near the ceiling; and in all the walls are recesses, which answer the purposes of shelves. In

one of these recesses stood a basket of clothing, in another a basket coated with bitumen, which served as a basin. The largest one was provided with doors, and in the cupboard thus formed the ladies kept some of their trinkets and choicest finery. In two angles of the room were fitted brackets, on which stood a few copper plates and vessels, sweetmeats in earthenware bowls, and small porous drinking-cups and water-jars. Most of the decorative effects of the builders had been lavished upon one wall, the north one, opposite which the visitor's seat was placed. Near the roof was a row of small looking-glasses, below which hung a broad strip of red cloth, with an embroidered pattern of red and white and a knotted fringe. Then came a row of bits of cardboard stained with vivid colours. Next, another strip of cloth, black, and about five inches wide, upon which were sewn figures, stars, crescents, etc., cut out of pieces of red, green, and purple cloths. Still lower were two of the recesses and the cupboard already referred to, which was placed in the centre of the wall. Between the niches and the end walls hung two squares of cardboard, one white, decorated with red and yellow rings, the other yellow with white rings; and between each niche and the cupboard was placed a red card with gilt lettering—doubtless some suitable maxim from the Koran. The furniture of the place consisted of a couple of *sereers*, some cheap rugs and pillows, and a rush mat, on which the food was spread. Piles of bright coloured blankets were stacked on top of the screen

that cut off the antechamber. The screen itself was painted with rude designs in a crushed strawberry colour upon a drab ground.

The ladies of the harem gave their visitor a cordial greeting. Any visitor must be a welcome diversion to the deadly monotony of their existence; and a "lady from across the seas" was a curiosity to be carefully examined while present, and talked of for months afterwards. Her dress and ornaments were objects of intense interest to the Arab ladies, who, however, were careful to avoid giving offence by undue curiosity. With the natural instinct of their sex, they devoted most attention to an examination of Mrs. Haynes' bonnet. Such a head-dress they had never seen before, that is certain, and they are not likely to see one again. Was Hajji pestered for a copy of that Parisian model, I wonder? Probably not; for he might resort to drastic measures, such as his Western brethren dare not adopt, to silence the pleadings of his favourites. Happy man!

Questions of a distinctly personal kind were the order of the day. "How old was the *sitt*? How long had she been married? How many children had she?" Then: "Was America in London? Was it as good a place as Niffer?" and so forth, and so on.

Hajji's favourite wife, Lira, is a rather good-looking girl, according to all accounts, not much over twenty years old. She was named Lira by her lord and master because that was the sum he paid for her; and she seems to have turned out a satisfactory bargain, for rumour has it that he

trusts her with the keeping of much of his wealth. Certainly she is to all intents and purposes *the* wife of the sheikh, and the other three are mere cyphers in the household. One of them is quite an old woman, who acts as "mother" to the rest, and the two others are about thirty.

Some six weeks after his arrival, Dr. Hilprecht determined to pay a flying visit to the mounds of Fara and Abu Hatab, in order to obtain reliable information as to their characteristics. Mr. Haynes and I accompanied him, and we left Niffer at sunset one Saturday. We had only two small boats, and found them rather cramped quarters for ourselves, our *zaptiehs*, and the men with us; but although my companions complained of lack of room, I managed to find enough space to sleep in, and consequently felt quite fit and fresh when we reached Ibn Erfu the next morning. There we halted to breakfast. The canal at this part is very broad but shallow. I noticed two houses built of bricks that evidently came from some old ruin, but for the rest the village consisted of the usual mud and mat huts.

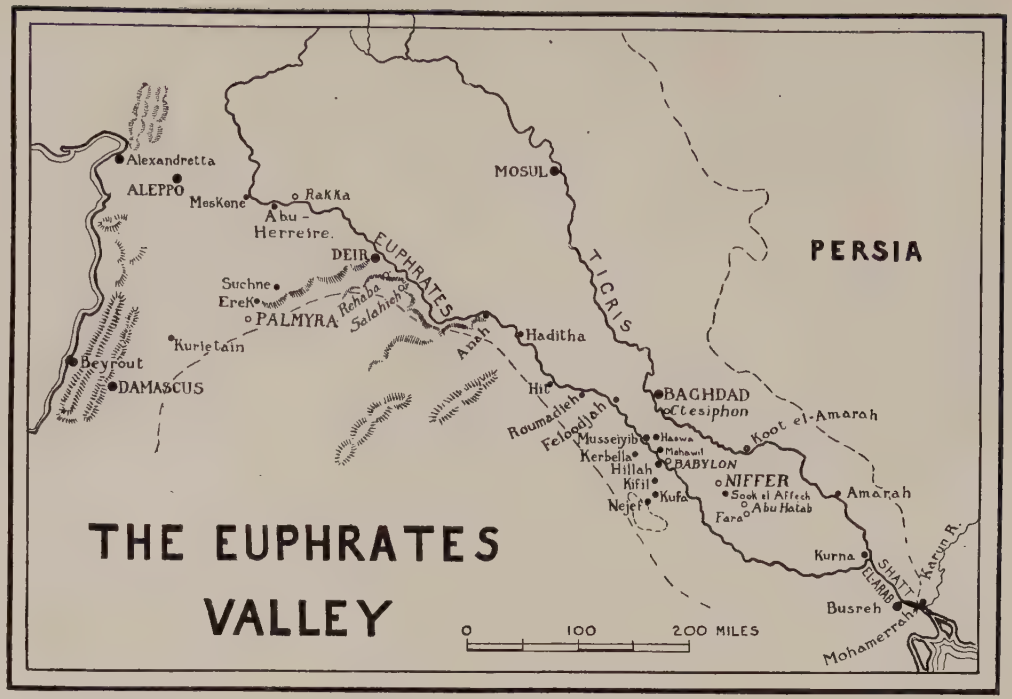
Under the guidance of some of the villagers we set off for Abu Hatab, and after walking for three quarters of an hour and crossing a number of irrigation canals reached the mounds. They are of considerable extent but very low, and quantities of pre-Sargonic bricks, broken drain pipes, and other traces of buildings are scattered over the surface. The site would be a particularly easy one to excavate, and it would surely repay investigation.

While we were on the spot, the villagers grubbed out a fine bronze bowl. Unfortunately in the squabble for its possession it was broken; but the find serves to show what might be looked for if the mounds were intelligently explored; and if England wishes to re-enter the field of Babylonian excavation, in which she has so distinguished herself in the past, Abu Hatab would probably be a good place at which to try her luck.

Dr. Hilprecht took all the notes and measurements he required, while Mr. Haynes made photographs, and I was busied with a hasty survey. Then we returned to the boats, and with some difficulty persuaded the boatmen to go on to Fara. They were tired after their long night's work and very disinclined to go farther just then; but they allowed themselves to be persuaded by promises of *backsheesh*; and after taking on a couple of local guards, we proceeded on our way. One of the guards had a showy pseudo-English "repeating" rifle. He was very proud of it, and willingly allowed me to inspect it. I found that the magazine was a sham; the stock was worm-eaten; and the inscription, to which its owner called my attention with obvious satisfaction, read

RDMY & MEMDMEMNƧ
RDMY & MM
DBDMEMVM TOOTOO
RDMDMEMVU.

The "tootoo" seemed singularly appropriate! It would be interesting to know the source of manu-



SKETCH MAP OF EUPHRATES VALLEY, ETC., SHOWING NIFFER AND THE PRINCIPAL TOWNS AND RUINS ON THE OVERLAND ROUTE FROM BAGHDAD.

facture of this wonderful weapon. If its owner ever fired it, I fear it would result in British firearms obtaining a bad reputation in the neighbourhood. The other guard had apparently taken French leave with a neighbour's gun; for no sooner were we off than a man on horseback rode after us and insisted upon the weapon being given up to him. The owner of the "repeater," who was of negro blood, was very abusive to the horseman, talked big, and threatened him with his *martli*. Eventually, however, the gun was given up, and the humiliated guard was pacified by the loan of one of our workmen's weapons.

The negro escort turned out an utter duffer; lost his way, and got us stuck in a very narrow canal. But since we could see the mounds of Fara in the distance, we got out of the boats and set off on foot. Some distance from the mounds we passed a particularly poor village of mud huts. The entire population of the place had been driven from their houses by the fleas, and were camped a little way off in temporary mat shelters. The place was called el-Bussein. Several of the men were of markedly light complexion. They were armed, for the most part, with long-barrelled and quaint stocked guns of an antiquated type, and they appeared singularly unsophisticated.

The mounds of Fara are more attractive in appearance than those of Abu Hatab, higher and of better colour—more like the Niffer mounds upon a small scale. There are some large wells, built with pre-Sargonic bricks, and drains, besides the

usual scatterings of bricks and pottery. Judging by the few specimens that have been obtained from the site by Arab diggers, the antiquities of the place promise well for excavations; and the Germans who are going to work there will doubtless find their labours well repaid.

On our way back to the boats we stopped for Mr. Haynes to take some photographs of caper shrubs for Dr. Hilprecht, who told me that the old Babylonians always had to pay an extra tribute of capers on land bordering canals. It seems that the plant thrives best quite close to the water, for all those we noticed were on the edge of the streams. They have a smooth, oval, dark green leaf, small but sharp yellow thorns, an extremely pretty white flower with a sweet perfume, and the seed is contained in a covering much like an unopened daisy.

Our boats had succeeded in forcing their way up to the village, where we re-embarked; and after two and a half hours' travel we reached Ibn Erfu again, a quarter of an hour before sunset. There we called a halt, partly to have a meal, and partly to give a rest to our boatmen, who stood sadly in need of it. The sheikh sent us a warm invitation to dine with him, but we were too fatigued for any ceremony, and so declined his hospitality as politely as possible. He, however, sent us out coffee, and dined our people in handsome style. While we fed, the villagers squatted round and watched us in silence; but as soon as we had finished our meal, we were all pestered by people with *anticas* to sell, who had not the remotest idea of the value of their

wares. For the most trumpery beads they asked two or three liras, and one ancient dame offered me a tablet for the nominal price of fifteen pounds.

When at length we got away, after a great row with the local guards, who demanded exorbitant pay, we travelled all night. One of my boatmen had a touch of marsh fever, and begged for *dowah*. I gave him quinine pills, explaining that he must swallow them whole. Of course he bit them up, to see what they were like, and the expression on his face when he got their bitterness in his mouth was comical to a degree; but he politely told me they were "entirely good," and certainly they cured him thoroughly. At Abud el-Musa, the next village to Ibn Erfu, an attempt was made to stop us in order to levy toll upon us. The villagers declared that we ought to have taken guards from them instead of from Ibn Erfu, since we were in their territory. It seemed that they were at loggerheads with their neighbours, and were enraged that their rivals should have any profit from us; but our local men were extremely diplomatic, wheedling and bullying by turns until we were well past the place; and though some of the villagers went so far as to point their guns at us, nothing serious came of the disturbance.

Dawn found us only two hours from Hajji Tarfa's village, and soon after daybreak we fetched up at Sook el-Affech. There we paid a visit to the *vakil*, a polite but insignificant personage, and after a breakfast in the porch of the official residence, set off again for Niffer.

The scenery around the place was far from unattractive, thanks to the spring season. Lovely ranunculi covered the surface of the marshy waters and filled the air with their sweet perfume, and the grass on the banks was delightfully green; but the levels of land and water were almost identical; and a single cut with a spade would turn land to water at most parts. The Arabs whom we saw walking or working in the fields all wore their shirts tucked high, for a promenade in that district entails a good deal of wading and some little swimming. However, we all enjoyed our little trip thoroughly, although we were tired when we reached the camp. As for our boatmen, they announced their intention of sleeping "for a week"; and they looked as if they might carry out the plan, poor fellows.

XIV

AFTER having been the scene of so much bustle and activity for a year and a half, the mounds were deserted. All the antiquities had been packed away; and we members of the expedition had taken our last walk over the site, which was about to resume its silence and solitude until the next campaign should be commenced. Soon the trenches and tunnels, gradually filling up as the desert winds and sand did their work, would become once more the haunts of hyænas and jackals who had been driven away by the noise of our workers and the proximity of our camp. The workmen themselves would resume their original callings until the *firenghis* should come again with an offer of good wages and regular work; the basket-carriers, scrapers, and pick-men would become shepherds, brickmakers, carpenters, traders, or mayhap thieves—for we had several gentry of doubtful antecedents amongst the two or three hundred men employed. Most of them were sorry that the work was over for the time being; and we too felt some regrets at leaving the familiar spot; but in our case the regrets were more than balanced by the pleasing anticipation of return to

our friends and homes after nearly two years' absence.

I had determined to take the opportunity of visiting Nejef and Kerbellah, before returning home; and Mr. Fisher having agreed to accompany me, we arranged to go first to Hillah, where we should be able to make better arrangements for travel than we could hope to do at Niffer. Dr. Hilprecht had originally intended to go to Nejef also, and we had looked forward to making the journey in his company; but unfortunately he sprained his ankle in the trenches a few days before the close of the work, and had to abandon the trip.

Shaoul Suleiman had engaged at Hillah several large *sefinahs* for the transport of our party, the baggage, and antiquities; and had come down on one of them himself, taking the opportunity to do some private business in the neighbourhood cheaply. It had been originally planned that we should all leave Niffer together; but at the last moment it was found possible for Dr. Hilprecht, Mr. Fisher, and myself to set out a little earlier than we had expected; and as we wanted to get to Baghdad at about the same time as Mr. and Mrs. Haynes, we decided to hire three small boats to take us as far as Hillah, which would enable us to travel much faster.

On the 11th of May everything was ready for the start; the neighbouring sheikhs had paid their farewell visits and received their final presents; the bulk of the heavy baggage was on board the *sefinahs*; and most of the little colony of workmen from

Hillah, along with their wives and families and goods and chattels, were either embarked or camped alongside the flotilla. Shaoul had been instructed to engage three *meshoofs* for our service, and had promised that they should be ready at four in the afternoon; but nobody who knows the country will be at all surprised to hear that at ten o'clock we were sitting on our baggage by the side of the swamp, waiting for them to appear. Then two of them came gliding out of the darkness, and after much angry exhortation Shaoul himself set off and hunted up the third. Thereupon followed hurried adieus to our friends, the Commissioner, and a host of workmen, who insisted on kissing our hands, and united in wishing us a pleasant journey and a speedy return. Wild and ragged as most of them were, we had learned to like some of them well; and they had, I think, reciprocated our good feelings; so the parting was not without regret on both sides. But at last we were off, and as I heard the ripple of the water against the bows of my light craft, I lit my pipe and leaned back on my cushions, glad to know that at length we were really homeward bound, and feeling thoroughly at peace with all the world. For travelling in an open boat under the clear starry skies of the East is a most soothing experience, and he would be indeed a strangely constituted person who failed to appreciate the charm of it.

Each of us had a *meshoof* with our own servant and baggage on board. Dr. Hilprecht and Mr. Fisher had also a *zaptieh* apiece, but for my part I preferred the extra room which the absence of the

guard afforded. My craft was about fifteen feet long and very narrow, so that when my baggage and cooking pots and provisions were stowed away there was very little room for myself and Daoud, who had entered my service with the Commissioner's consent. But I had my bed spread out on the bottom of the boat and made myself as comfortable as I could under the circumstances. At first we poled our way through great swamps, in which the rushes and reeds grew to a height of six or seven feet above the water in most places, where we could hear the wild duck and geese scurrying off at our approach.

As soon as we started, the mosquitoes commenced operations upon us. Fortunately I had a head-net, which protected my face from their onslaughts; but my hands and wrists got terribly bitten; and my companions were both sadly pestered. Almost as bad as the mosquitoes were the fleas, with which all three boats swarmed. Accustomed as we were to their activity, it seemed to us that never before had we been so tormented, and at first sleep was quite impossible for any of us. In a couple of hours, however, we got clear of the swamps and out of the shelter of the reeds into an open canal; and then the cool breeze speedily drove off the bloodthirsty flies, and we were able to snatch a few hours of broken sleep, while the boats pursued their way silently and swiftly for the greater part of the night.

Once or twice we roused up, when we came to spots where the canals had been dammed up and

the banks had only lately been cut through. At such spots the waters would be rushing down violently, sweeping masses of reeds and débris along with them; for the floods were coming down; and it sometimes took the united efforts of all our boatmen to haul one of the boats at a time up the miniature rapids. It was ticklish work at times, in the moonlight, and if a tow-rope had been broken it is certain that the light craft would have been capsized, which would have been a serious matter for its occupant pinned under the thwarts. But I was too sleepy to stir, and could only rouse myself sufficiently to admire the lordly way in which Daoud instructed the workmen about their work, yelling at them not to bump the boat so, as the *sahib* was asleep,—asleep in that noise! Would they have stood his hectoring and abuse, I wondered, if they had known he was a cursed infidel?

About an hour and a half before sunrise our boats halted and the men had a rest, which they occupied in smoking cigarettes in preference to trying to sleep, and then we were off again, in the first pale light of dawn. Daybreak was very beautiful. A rich crimson crept across the sky, driving the velvety purple westwards, while in the east some little gold-flecked clouds grew dazzlingly bright and brighter each moment, until at last the sun himself came up above the low horizon and day was with us. And very soon the flies were with us too, stinging horribly, in a way that no Western fly could ever sting, and declining to be driven away for more than a second or two by even

the most vigorous efforts. It is all very well to joke about the fly and his pertinacity in England, but anyone who went through the experience of a morning such as we had that day would not be likely to consider it a joking matter.

Two hours after sunrise we reached a large village, Hajji Makeef, where we stopped and landed, to boil some water for our breakfast and give the boatmen another short rest. It was a flourishing place, the sheikh being a man of enterprise and going in for agriculture on quite a large scale for an Arab. Two large circular *mafteel*, built of mud and pierced with holes for gun or rifle defence, guarded the place against attack from raiding parties; and the sheikh's own dwelling was also built of mud; but the majority of the houses were after the usual style of Mesopotamian architecture, of mats and palm-leaf wattle stretched over reed frames. Besides the usual date-palm groves, there were large gardens of fig and peach trees which lent the scene quite a distinguished character; and yellow buildings showed up brightly against the various shades of green of the foliage, making a far more attractive picture than the villages of those parts usually offer. By the bank three large *sefinahs* were tied up, taking in grain which was to be shipped to Busreh, and the whole village was busy at the work of loading them. But our arrival was not allowed to pass unnoticed. Our strange methods of eating with knives and forks, and our simple toilet operations, were watched with interest by scores of curious villagers of both sexes and all

ages. The servants and *zaptiehs*, too, were plied with questions, "Had the foreigners really found a well, guarded by a *jinn*, which was full of jewels and gold? Where was the treasure? And where were the two great dogs?" and a host of other questions of the like nature, to all of which our people returned whatever answers they thought best fitted to surprise or amuse the querists, rather regardless of veracity it is to be feared. There was keen competition on the part of thrifty housewives to sell us milk, eggs, native bread, and dates; for the people of the neighbourhood have learned by this time that the *firenghis* are, after all, not such terribly, unclean things, and that they pay fair prices for anything they take. A few antiquities were offered to Dr. Hilprecht, but, as usual, nothing of any value.

Breakfast over and the boatmen rested, we set off again, and travelled on nearly four hours to Daghara. There, while the servants went foraging for provisions, we called upon the *mudir*, Anim Bey, who proved a most pleasant old gentleman, and was extremely pressing in his invitations that we should dine with him. But knowing that it would be a strain on his hospitality if we accepted, we compromised by drinking his coffee and providing the solid part of the banquet ourselves. He told us that he had only been in the place a few months, and would be glad to get away from it because it was so unhealthy. His wife was ill with fever, and he himself had had a slight touch of it; and he was very grateful when Dr. Hilprecht was

able to provide some simple remedies. The *serai* and its outbuildings were in a terribly dilapidated condition; and it was impossible to avoid feeling that a man like our host, who had been educated in Europe, must feel extremely out of his element in such surroundings.

After leaving Daghara, we journeyed on until nightfall, when our men became so insistent upon having a rest that we stopped at the small village of How'edin, where we had our dinner in some comfort. This village was typical of the country at its worst; all the houses were tumbling to bits; and the inhabitants, who were in rags, looked utterly listless and shiftless, and regarded us with evident suspicion. They hung about the boats and our belongings with the very obvious intention of picking up any stray articles they could get their hands on; and although they offered to sell us milk and eggs at high prices, they took no pains to conceal their disapproval of the foreigners. One of the *zaptiehs* told me that everyone in the place was head over ears in debt to a miserly old sheikh who lived in a large house some three miles distant, and that no one cared to work, since he could never hope to get any profit for himself. Under the circumstances, it was small wonder that the place looked so squalid, and that its people were so ready to steal if opportunity offered. Fortunately we lost nothing, because we had a guard set over the boats all the time we were there; but we were glad to get away, as we did soon after midnight. Early next morning we reached the village of Hayghan-

the-Greater, where Mr. Fisher went with me to see the house which had been the scene of my captivity. We met several villagers whom I recognised, who remembered me and joked me about the time I was a prisoner.

It was a very hot day, the flies were troublesome on the river, and our boatmen complained of being tired, so at noon we called a halt for an hour, and rested under a great *nebbek* tree beside a little farmstead. For one piastre we purchased some delicious milk and about fifty cucumbers for our lunch. Cucumbers and milk make a very fine meal, and it would surprise most Europeans to see how many cucumbers, skin and all, one can eat with impunity in those parts. The *zaptiehs*, servants, and boatmen all ate heartily, and when we were ready to move, our boatmen made good progress after the *kaif*. For my part, I had two hours' good sleep under the hot sun, while Daoud and the *zaptieh*, Ali (who had come to my boat for a change), fanned me and kept the flies from me.

I wish I could convey some idea of the charm of such a journey, but it seems impossible to do so. Of course the brilliant, soaking sunshine is the most telling factor in the whole; without it the scenery would be nothing short of melancholy; but with it, it is charming. The broad river running so swiftly between its dark brown banks, which sometimes rise up steeply, all seamed and cracked by the heat, and sometimes slope down, grass-covered, to the water's edge, sparkles and glitters magnificently. At frequent intervals there are

little hamlets of mud-built houses, each with its date-palm groves and its flocks and herds of sheep and goats and cattle. Sometimes sleepy buffaloes that have been wallowing in the mud rise with an indignant snort and plunge hurriedly ashore as your boat goes past them, causing the little craft to dance up and down on the waves sent off by their ungainly flight. Camels gaze calmly at the strange men in strange clothes and head-dress; and at every village the watch-dogs come rushing out to bark furiously. The men towing the boats generally carry a stick, which they wave behind them when the dogs become too excited and make rushes at their bare legs; but they never look round, for they know the character of the animals too well to fear a real attack. Bent forward, with the rope looped round their shoulders, the towers plod on steadily hour after hour, up and down the bank, round the *churds*, and sometimes—when the path is not good—in the water itself. Then, if they are thirsty, they drink, stooping a little farther forward until they can scoop the water up with the right hand and throw it into their mouths, but never stopping. Women clad in the unvarying blue robe of the country, who have come down to fill their earthen pitchers or waterskins, stop to stare at the *firenghis* as they go by, or to exchange broad chaff with the boatmen and servants. Little children shout after the boats—sometimes such things as would bring a blush to the cheek of the most proficient swearer of the West,—and the *zaptiehs* answer them, laugh-

ing, that they know all about *their* parents, and proceed to give the family pedigree, with variations, until the boat is out of earshot. These little brats all have their heads shaved perfectly smooth, and it would be hard to think of anything that could look more absolutely raw than they, as they swim or paddle about, utterly nude and absolutely unashamed.

Late in the afternoon we stopped, as Dr. Hilprecht's two boatmen were tired out, and he wanted to hire extra hands to help to tow his boat, which was rather larger and heavier than either of ours. While we waited for the bargain to be driven, we heard that Dr. Koldewey, of the German expedition at Babel, had passed us in the night on his way to Niffer, whither he was going in the hope of meeting Dr. Hilprecht before he left. It seems strange that we could possibly have missed him; but we certainly had done so, and he therefore had his journey for nothing.

From that point onwards the signs that we were approaching a large town were numerous. The land was all under cultivation, and the *churds* were thickly massed along the banks. The people, too, took on a more civilised appearance; and they were more pleasant looking and far better dressed than the Affech Arabs. Willow trees were very plentiful, but though they lent agreeable variety to the scenery, they sadly hampered the towing of our flotilla. Indeed, they were very nearly the cause of an accident to Dr. Hilprecht's boat. The towers were all going at their best

speed, anxious to reach the end of their journey as soon as possible; and the Doctor's boat was leading, when the tow-rope fouled the top of a willow and got caught there. Instantly the *meshoof* swung out into the stream, broadside on to the current. Before my boat, which was second, could be stopped, we collided, and the next second Mr. Fisher's craft ran into both of us. Instantly both the *zaptiehs* and all the servants began shouting contrary advice and instructions, while the towers, instead of giving way, tried to force the rope over the top of the tree. Thereupon Dr. Hilprecht's *meshoof* heeled dangerously over and shipped so much water that we thought every moment she would sink, while Mr. Fisher and I had hard work to get our craft separated and their tow-ropes disentangled. At the last moment the leading men let go the tow-rope, and the threatened *meshoof* immediately righted herself and drifted away in safety. The only damage done was the wetting of the baggage and bedding; but Dr. Hilprecht's *zaptieh* and Shammo were both furious with the boatmen, and threatened them with a sound thrashing at Hillah.

We reached the town three and a half hours after sunset, having done the journey in remarkably good time. As it was too late to move into a *khan* or go to Shaoul's house, we decided to camp out before one of the riverside coffee-shops. A supper was produced somehow, and after we had eaten it we had our beds spread out on *tucketts*, which were arranged in the form of a hollow

A CHURD ON THE EUPHRATES.

square round our baggage; and very soon we were sound asleep under the stars. During the night more than one attempt was made to steal some of our belongings; but the *zaptiehs* and servants took turns at watching, and the thieves got nothing for their pains. The pariah dogs and stray cats were more successful, and managed to carry off some fish and a couple of chickens. Next morning we were up betimes, for the town was early astir; and naturally the sight of three Europeans sleeping on the river's bank attracted a crowd, who watched us making our morning toilet with considerable amusement. As soon as possible, we moved to less public quarters; Dr. Hilprecht going to a *khan*, whence he set out the same afternoon to visit the German expedition at Babel; and Mr. Fisher and myself to the house of Shaoul Suleiman, where we were made welcome guests.

We set about making inquiries concerning the means of getting to Nejef immediately, but the matter proved to be not so simple as we had been led to believe. In the afternoon I had a slight touch of fever, and was obliged to lie up; and although a good dose of quinine set me to rights again in a few hours, it meant so much delay in our plans. In the evening, to our great astonishment, we heard that the boats from Niffer had arrived, having left about five hours after us and travelled without a single stop. It must be borne in mind that although they had larger and very much heavier craft to get along, they had all the

Hillah workmen to assist at the towing; and by working gangs in relays they had been able to travel all the time; nor had it been necessary for them to stop to do any cooking, as they could make fires on the boats. But all that notwithstanding they had certainly done well, and created quite a record for the passage of such craft. Everyone from Mr. Haynes down to the smallest boy had lent a hand at the tow-ropes, and the result was certainly a surprise to us. We went over to see them, and afterwards carried off Abd el-Kader for a smoke and a chat. His account of the race amused us very highly; and we saw that if we wanted to be in Baghdad as soon as the others, we should certainly have to exert ourselves. Fortunately they had some packing to do, which ought to occupy them at least a day; and we determined that if we were not in Baghdad before them, despite the big detour we were to make, it should not be our fault.

We were told by Shaoul that there was no hope whatever of securing a carriage to take us to Nejef, and that our best chance of getting there was to charter another boat and go by way of the Macharieh canal to Kufa. This canal had been opened to traffic only the previous day, having been cleared and made practicable after lying disused for some years; and it seemed very doubtful if we should succeed in the attempt to get through it. But all means of land transport were hopeless to us; the thousands of pilgrims flocking to the holy cities for the Moharrem celebrations

had engaged everything available; and we had either to accept Shaoul's suggestion or abandon the trip, so I told him to engage a boat of some sort for us with all despatch. He went off, saying it would be a difficult matter, but he would see what could be done; and just before noon he came back triumphant, to tell us that he had succeeded, and that the craft would be ready at nine o'clock, Arabic. All he could find was one small *sefinah*, which had been undergoing repairs, and was even then not quite ready to take the water; but we were in no mood to stand at trifles, and promptly closed with the bargain; for we had been to the *khan* again and seen the packing going on at a tremendous rate, and our chances of getting to Baghdad before the rest of the party looked particularly poor.

Fortunately there was very little delay in our actual departure. Contrary to our expectations, the boat was positively ready at the time promised; and although it was the most ramshackle and disreputable old tub I had ever set eyes on, we hastened aboard it with all our belongings. Then followed a long haggle about *backsheesh*, with one and another, which exasperated us to the last degree. The *sheikh es-sefinah* (or owner) wanted too much of the payment in advance; the *nokador* clamoured for money to buy food; and a crowd of hangers-on insisted on joining in the discussion, although they had no concern in the business at all. This love of meddling with other people's concerns is an amusing feature in the Arab character at times; but we felt that this was no time for such

nonsense; so we kicked the *sheikh es-sefinah* ashore, drove the *nokador* to the helm, and forced the crew of two to cast off our moorings and shove out into the stream. The last we saw of the crowd was an angry group of disappointed beggars, headed by the *sefinah* proprietor, clamouring round poor Shaoul. I could tell by the characteristic shrug of his shoulders and waving of his hands that he had no intention of gratifying their cupidity, and we both felt glad of it.

I have said that the boat was disreputable, and she certainly was. She was built of a strange assortment of scraps of planking and boarding, and pieces from sugar boxes and whisky cases, which were nailed to a frame of saplings of outrageously twisted forms, and her hull was destitute of all paint. The mast was a twisted, stunted pole, and the sail proved to be a collection of holes held together by a few shreds of cotton cloth. But she was fairly clean and roomy, and under the circumstances we felt ourselves very lucky to have got any sort of craft at all.

The crew matched the boat, and were a scratch lot. The *nokador* was well enough in himself, fairly respectable in appearance and pleasant to deal with, as we soon discovered; but he was the most excitable old fellow I have ever seen, I think, even for an Arab; and when his unhandy crew got us into any sort of a scrape (which they did, at first, every few minutes), he would dance about in his rage and wheeze and curse in a most ludicrous style. Next to him was a cross-eyed, powerful

ruffian who did a lot of work, and did it well, as soon as he learnt the eccentricities of our noble craft; and the last member of our crew was a pock-marked, loutish youth, evidently only half-witted, who was continually diving overboard after things dropped by himself and the *nokador*. We had with us Ali and Suleiman, the two *zaptiehs* who had come with us from Niffer. They were to return to Diwaniyeh after accompanying us as far as Nejef, having obtained special leave at Hillah to go so far with us. The arrangement answered all our purposes well, for they would be taken quite near their destination, and we preferred to have men we knew rather than strangers.

For the first hour we had merely to drift down the stream, which fortunately allowed the crew time to become accustomed to the boat, and we got along very well. Then we turned off westwards down the Macharieh canal, passing under a well-built bridge of brick at the entrance, and found ourselves between very high banks which completely shut us in on either side, so that it was impossible to see if there were any villages. But there were the inevitable *churds* at work, and we noticed that the few people we saw were more prosperous looking and better dressed than the *fellahin* generally are, from which we concluded that the land belonged to some wealthy pasha. They stared at us with much curiosity, which was only natural, as ours was the first boat to pass through the canal that way since it had been cleared out.

The weather looked very threatening, and

shortly after sunset the *nokador* wanted to stop for the night; but I insisted upon pressing forward, encouraged by the sight of a flotilla of sailing-boats which had come through from Kufa that day and lay moored by the banks. Their crews were cooking their supper, and invited our party to join them. Our *nokador* was extremely anxious to accept the proferred hospitality, and nearly wept when I threatened to cut off his pay if he made any delay; but he gave way, and we went steadily on, poling our way along the banks. At half-past two a frightful storm burst suddenly over us, and as it was quite impossible for us to make headway, or even to hold our own, we were forced to tie up. This matter was not accomplished without difficulty, for it seemed that our boat had no mooring-pegs; but I produced an iron-shod stick, which I carried for use with a prismatic compass, as a substitute, and Ali managed to drive it well into the bank, using his rifle-butt as a mallet. So we were secured at last, and just in time. Down came the wind, as if it meant to blow all our baggage out of the boat. Then there was a brief but very smart shower, followed by a terrible storm of dust and sand which stung us and half-blinded us; and then more rain, steady, soaking, for an hour and a half. The boat was quite open and there was no shelter ashore; so we had to sit huddled up on our bedding, holding up umbrellas as soon as the wind allowed us to do so, the two servants holding one end of a mat over us, while the *zaptiehs* sat on the other end of it to prevent its being blown away.

The discomfort was bad enough, but the exasperation of the delay was worse. Ali, who was of an extraordinarily cheerful disposition, kept on assuring us "*Kooloo yenguthi* (everything finishes), sahib, and this *can't* last long." Nor did it, for the rain stopped as suddenly as it had commenced, and we instructed the *nokador* to proceed at once. His astonishment was unfeigned. "What? Go, after all that! Much better wait till dawn." But we insisted, and he gave way with much better grace than we expected. The promise of *backsheesh* quickly put new life into him and his two fellows, and we got away wonderfully sharply. As soon as we were on the move we had our beds unrolled, and were sound asleep in a very few minutes.

When we awoke, soon after daybreak, we were in sight of Kifil, and felt that we had done well indeed. But our progress was not to be so smooth as we hoped. First, we experienced a lot of difficulty in squeezing under a low bridge, which seemed at first quite an impassable obstacle; and it was only by loading the boat with clods of earth almost down to water-level, and shoving her along with our feet as we lay on our backs, that we finally overcame the difficulty. Very soon after getting through this place we got badly stuck in some shallows amongst the reedy marshes, and spent nearly an hour trying to find a channel. However, we finally succeeded in forcing a way through for ourselves, and afterwards got along very well. Here the high-banked canal had given place to a flat, swampy country, where wild duck

and geese were plentiful; and the sails of many boats were dotted about in all directions.

Kifil stands on a low island, and is a small place supported chiefly by the pilgrims, who hire boats there for Kufa when they come overland from Hillah. Several trim-looking craft lay moored to the banks, and as we approached nearer we saw many pilgrims embarking, including a large number of Persians. Loftus visited the town in 1851, and he writes of it as looking "dull and sombre in the extreme" from its "want of luxuriant trees and vegetation"; but we found it very different, with many palms and willows, and presenting an aspect of life and bustle. But then Loftus saw it just after it had been the scene of hard fighting between the Turks and Arabs. His description of Ezekiel's tomb, which is, of course, the great show-place of Kifil, may be quoted word for word, since it is the same now as it was when he saw it. He says: "Of course, the edifice of the Jewish monarch" (Jeconiah, who, according to Benjamin of Tudela, erected the structure) "has long since fallen to ruin, and the present edifice is comparatively modern. It is remarkably plain, both externally and internally, containing two vaulted apartments—the roof of the outer one being supported by heavy columns. The sepulchre is cased in a large wooden box. . . . The chamber itself is square, the side walls being extremely dirty and greased with oil. The floor is covered with a filthy matting. The vaulted ceiling is very prettily ornamented with scrolls of gold, silver, and bronze. Built into one corner is an

ancient Hebrew copy of the Pentateuch. A scanty light is admitted from above, and an ever-burning lamp sheds a solemn gloom into the sanctuary. The flat terrace or roof affords a good view of the marshes extending to the base of the little elevation upon which the town of Kifil stands. The flooring of the terrace is, however, in such a state of lamentable filth that the Jews might, with every justice, be charged with paying little or no respect to the memory of their prophet." Regarding the exterior he says: "The spire of the sacred tomb is the frustrum of an elongated cone, tapering to a blunted top by a succession of divisions or steps cut and embellished in a peculiar manner." It is very similar to the spire of Zobeide's tomb at Baghdad, but is in far better preservation.

Such was the place reverenced by the Mohammedans almost as much as the Jews; but it did not tempt us to more than a hurried survey, for our delay in the marshes had made us anxious to press on to Kufa. So we hoisted our rag of a sail and with the wind right astern of us flew off at a fine pace down a branch of the Hindieh canal. A poor dog, which had somehow lost one of his hind legs, ran along the bank, keeping up with us for a long way in a surprising manner. Evidently he was used to being fed by the passing pilgrims; and for once in a way he got a good meal from the *giaour* for a change. Very soon we caught our first glimpse of the golden dome and minarets of Meshed Ali, glittering in the early morning sun, and it certainly was a fine sight. As we advanced

we saw more boatloads of pilgrims, all hastening the same way as ourselves. Most of them overtook and passed us in an aggravating fashion; for though we were doing fairly well, considering the state of our boat and her rigging, we made a very poor show against their fast craft.

As we neared Kufa we were struck with the luxuriant growth of the willow trees and the verdant appearance of the banks, the scenery being strikingly similar to that of the Tigris immediately below Baghdad. A well-constructed bridge of boats connected the two banks of the canal, and we landed just above it at a quarter-past three. Our boatmen were paid off, and received their *backsheesh* with so much gratitude as to quite astonish us.

We had been told that we should in all probability be the object of unpleasant attentions at Kufa, especially at such a season as the Moharrem, when fanaticism runs high and "outsiders" are regarded even less favourably than usual; but we were agreeably surprised to find that our arrival attracted little or no attention. On the other hand, we were the object of keen competition on the part of the various owners of animals, who all wished us to hire their particular beasts, and nearly came to blows between themselves over the matter; and the keeper of the coffee-shop which we visited did not scorn to supply us with tea and coffee, and only charged a fair price for it.

Leaving Ali and the servants to strike a bargain for animals, we set off on foot, accompanied

by Suleiman, the other *zaptieh*, to explore the bazaar and get outside the town, in order to avoid the crowd of beggars who would otherwise have pestered us at our departure. The modern town is quite uninteresting, and owes its existence solely to the pilgrim traffic. The *hajjis* leave their boats at this point and hire animals to take them on to Nejef. The bazaar consists of a straggling line of booths, where the trashiest goods are offered for sale, but it is covered and fairly clean. Outside the town lie the mounds of débris which mark the site of old Kufa, formerly one of the finest cities of Arabia, where Ali was assassinated. The enormous extent of the rubbish-heaps, which are thickly covered with débris of brick, glass, pottery, and tiles, bears witness to the former greatness of the place; but now there are no traceable remains of any of the old buildings, for their material has all been used in the building of Nejef. About a quarter of a mile outside the town there stands a large mosque of a peculiar character, which is reported to be the one where Ali used to worship. It is surrounded by a very high wall, perfectly bare of openings and with semicircular bastions at regular intervals along it, which lend the building the appearance of a fortress. Over the top of this wall we could just see the tip of a dome covered with beautiful blue-glazed tiles. The whole was so remarkably well built that I feel inclined to believe that it must be due to Persian skill and enterprise. Standing amongst those dreary mounds of rubbish it looked singularly forbidding, and was eloquent of

the vigilance formerly necessary to guard it from desert robbers who would pay no respect to its sacred character.

In the shadow of this building we sat down to wait the arrival of our animals. In a short time they came up to us, two fine mules with pack-saddles, over which the servants had fastened their beds to make comfortable seats for us to ride upon, and half-a-dozen active little donkeys for the rest of our party and the baggage. The appearance we cut, perched on top of the pile of bedding, was certainly not dignified; and at first we had to exercise care to avoid falling off; but very soon we became used to the new style of travel, and by sitting side-saddle got along comfortably enough. The *zaptiehs* were intensely amused at the sight of our strange mounts, but their own appearance on top of the piles of baggage tied on their small donkeys was far funnier. They were both delighted to be riding again, and endeavoured to show off their skill by going through a performance of chasing imaginary robbers, but the donkeys strongly resenting such levity it terminated in a breakdown.

The distance to Nejef from Kufa is about eight miles, and the road is clearly marked out by a line of small fort-like buildings placed at regular distances apart. Our *zaptiehs* told us these buildings were for the protection of the road, and that they communicated with a subterranean waterway which was built long ago to take water to the holy city from a large canal. They also informed us

that a disused and silted-up canal, through the bed of which we passed, formerly afforded water communication with Busreh. Whether the story of the subterranean waterway were correct, I could not discover; but there certainly was a well-house, half-way along the road, called Beer el-Wust ("The half-way well"), where travellers can still get water, and I should imagine it proved a real blessing to many a thirsty pilgrim. The heat was simply terrific, for the bare desert reflected the sun's rays scorchingly, and we were nearly grilled by the time that we reached Nejef. We met many knots of animals returning to Kufa after taking pious *hajjis* into the city; and there were some few belated pilgrims going the same way as ourselves; but the majority had got over the journey in the cool hours of the morning. Everybody regarded us with surprise and curiosity, and we heard a few muttered curses levelled at us for unbelievers. But there were no active demonstrations of hostility, such as we had been led to expect.

Nejef stands on rising ground and is surrounded by a high brick wall which has semicircular bastions, similar to those on the wall of the mosque outside Kufa, spaced regularly along it. Outside the wall there is a deep moat, which is now dry and in many places almost choked with rubbish. To the north lies the cemetery, which occupies quite as much land, or more, than the city of the living; for it is the ambition of every good *Shiah* to be buried either at Nejef or Kerbellah; and thousands of bodies are brought every year to be

interred in the holy ground, sometimes from great distances. The tombs vary considerably in size and style. Some are elaborate structures with domes of glazed tiles or plastered and whitewashed brickwork, while others are humble mounds marked only by a few stones piled over them. Some of them were decorated with small flags, shreds of cloth, or even rags, attached by devotees or friends of the deceased; and many of them had inscriptions carved or painted on them. Of course, the most coveted sites for burials are within the precincts of the mosque itself, or, failing that, as near the holy spot as may be; but nowadays very few burials take place inside the city, for space is at a premium and such high rates are charged as none but the richest families can afford to pay.

The history of Nejef is interesting, but it is too well known for me to repeat it here. It may be advisable, however, to say a few words of explanation about the place and its companion city, Kerbellah.

The two great sects of Mohammedanism are the *Sunnis* and the *Shiahs*. The differences between them are considerable, but it is not necessary to enter into them in detail. All that need be said is that the *Shiahs* hold Kerbellah and Nejef in even greater veneration than Meccah; and a *Shiah* who has visited the tomb of Hussein, at Kerbellah, or that of Ali, at Nejef, considers himself every whit as good as the *hajji* who has been to Meccah. The chief festival of the *Shiahs* is the Moharrem, which they keep with fastings and

mournings in memory of the martyrdom of Hassan and Hussein; and it is also the great season for pilgrimages to the two cities. The two sects hate each other far more bitterly than they hate either Christians or Jews; but of the two the *Shiah* is far the more fanatical and less easy to get along with. For instance, no good *Shiah* will eat in company with unbelievers, although a *Sunni* will make no trouble at all about doing so; and the strict *Shiah* even carries his prejudices so far as to decline to eat with a *Sunni*.

Most fanatical of all are the Persians. For my own part, I confess that I cordially dislike the average Persian pilgrim; his bigotry is so pronounced, and his piety is of such an aggressive type. In his own country he may be a very estimable person indeed, but, if so, he generally seems to have left all his good qualities behind him when he sets out upon his travels. Undoubtedly he has a hard time of it in Turkish territory, for he is fleeced right and left by Arab and Turk alike; but if half the stories one hears are true, his own consular agents are the worst enemies he has. In any case, he hardly seems worth much pity or sympathy, for anyone more smugly self-complacent, despite his disgusting state of dirt and raggedness, it would be hard to find. Of course, the wealthier individuals are sometimes very respectable, but take them as a class Persian pilgrims compare most unfavourably with those of other races one sees. Unfortunately, when we got to Nejef, the place was full of them. They were the dirtiest-looking people

imaginable, and it was exasperating to see them lifting their filthy coats away from contact with us, or hear them mutter curses or spit as we passed them. The redeeming feature of such conduct was that it kept us from being contaminated by their vile rags.

Riding through a well-built gateway, which looked very new, we turned aside into the Khan Balidieh, where we had been advised to stay. It lies immediately to the left of the city gate, and is a very dirty, tumble-down place. We found it full to overflowing of unsavoury Persians, and had hard work to procure a room at all. Eventually we secured a small chamber opening off a verandah, or terrace, which ran along the front of the building on the upper storey and overlooked the square by the city gate.

This square was absolutely deserted at the time of our arrival, save for a few dogs and sheep, for it was high noon, and nobody would go abroad in the heat and glare unless forced to do so by business. The city seemed to lie gasping under the glaring sun, and in the *khan* the pilgrims were all gathered under the shade of the arches, cooking their midday meal, smoking, chatting, or praying. I seized the opportunity to go upon the roof of the building and take a couple of photographs of the golden dome of the mosque. Unfortunately it was only the dome and minarets that could be seen; and our *zaptiehs* were so alarmed at my daring to take a picture of even that portion of the holy place that I had to abandon all idea of trying to get

PERSIAN TRAVELLERS IN A KHAN AT NEJEF.

other photographs. It was impossible to use my camera without its being seen, on account of its size, and as Mr. Fisher had no plates for either of his hand-cameras, we lost many opportunities of interesting snapshots.

Immediately upon our arrival we had sent to inquire if there was any chance for us to secure an *arabanah* to take us to Kerbellah; and to our great surprise we learned that we should be able to get one the same evening. If we did not care to go on then, we should have to wait three days before there would be another vacant, the pilgrims having booked every seat in advance; so naturally we did not hesitate in closing with the offer.

As the start was to be made at half-past ten that afternoon; we had none too much time to explore the city before we left. Accordingly, we set out immediately to see the great mosque, taking Ali and Suleiman with us. But no sooner had we got into the bazaar than we were met by the chief of the police, who informed us that we positively must have a larger escort. We explained that we were pressed for time, and hinted at *backsheesh*, upon which he said that he would hasten to the *serai* and procure us a permit and some more *zaptiehs*. We thought it a bit of Turkish "officialism," but we had to put up with it; so our friend went off towards the *serai*, and we started leisurely through the bazaars. In a very few minutes he returned with three more *zaptiehs*, and we made our way to the mosque through the narrow, covered streets of the bazaar, which had little uncommon in them to call

for comment. The chief feature we noticed was the number of shrines of distinguished saints and other notabilities, which cropped up in the most unlikely places. Many of them possessed fine tile-work of beautiful blue glaze. I also saw two or three with pretty lattice-work in iron, brass, or wood; and one, which had a drinking fountain before it, boasted some really finely carved stone spandrels inlaid with old and beautiful tiles.

The youngsters of the place shouted uncomplimentary remarks after us and threw stones and mud; but their elders only looked at us curiously for the most part, and some even rose and salaamed as we passed. Indeed, the British are generally not unpopular in those parts; for the numerous Indian pilgrims who pass through the country usually speak well of British rule and justice; and it is certain that we should be regarded more favourably as masters than the hated "Osmanli."

The mosque is so closely surrounded by buildings that it is difficult to form a correct idea of its exterior. But we were taken to each of the gateways in turn and permitted to gaze as long as we cared into the courtyard from all sides. At each entrance hangs a heavy chain, looped across the doorway, which the pilgrims kiss as they enter the sacred precincts. The principal doorway was covered with tile-work of beautiful colouring and intricate design, but the others were of plain yellow brick, with only a few bands of tiles set round the arching and under it. The courtyard of the building was very spacious; everywhere the tiling was

remarkable for its rich and harmonious colouring; and the minarets sheathed with gold plates made the effect of the whole scene extremely gorgeous. Looking somewhat incongruous amidst its Oriental surroundings is a clock-tower with a modern clock by a well-known London maker. The great court was crowded with pilgrims, who were being conducted over the place by *seyyids* and *mullahs*; and the different colours of their robes added to the brightness of the picture. We had time also to notice that within the court there were several booths where prayer-stones and relics were on sale, but I saw none of the doves which Loftus describes as being sold for the purpose of sacrifice. Of course, we were not permitted to cross the threshold, and therefore could not see Ali's tomb, which is reserved for the adoration of the Faithful; nor had we any opportunity to see the treasures that are accumulated in vaults beneath the building and reputed to be of enormous value.

When we had seen as much as we could, we returned to the *khan*, where we *backsheeshed* the *zaptiehs* and their superior. Ali and Suleiman had also to be paid off, as they were to leave us and go south to Diwaniyeh; and we had some little difficulty in contriving to give them their presents without the local officer seeing just how much they got, a point upon which they were suggestively anxious. We managed it as we wished, however, and then our party set off to the point outside the city walls whence the *arabanahs* were to leave. At the last moment the local agent of the *arabanah*

company tried to cheat us over the payment; but our friend the chief of the police, who evidently felt that he had been well treated, intervened on our behalf, and greatly to our satisfaction sent the rascal away looking very small. We found our vehicle uncomfortably full of our baggage, with Daoud and Nasir squatting on top and a new *zaptieh* on the box beside the driver. For the first stage the team consisted of four useful-looking horses harnessed abreast, but afterwards, for the whole of the journey, we had teams of mules. The driver was a Persian, very much more respectable than most of his countrymen at Nejef, and he drove well but rather recklessly. There were four *arabanahs* besides our own, all packed with Persian pilgrims. Our own conveyance was so filled with our belongings that we were forced to copy the servants and sit cross-legged on top of the pile. The start was made at a quarter-past ten. At first our way lay along a comparatively level part of the plain, where we got along without too much jolting; but very soon we came to ground covered with billow-like ridges, where our waggon swayed and rocked like a boat at sea, threatening at every moment to capsize, and compelling us to cling tightly to the sides in order to avoid being thrown out. It was a decidedly uncomfortable experience, but we consoled ourselves by thinking what good progress we were making, and congratulated ourselves on having been able to get away at all that day.

Now and then the waggons would stop for a few minutes in a bunch, to rest the horses and

allow the passengers to stretch their legs, or chat with their friends in the other vehicles. On the first of these occasions a very dignified *seyyid*, clad in a beautiful white robe and an enormous white turban, came over to our *arabanah* and asked our *zaptieh* to change places with him. Naturally enough the *zaptieh* declined, and the *seyyid* had to hurry off to his place again, as we were on the point of starting. Daoud was inclined to laugh at the incident, but Nasir, whose religious instincts had been stirred up by his visit to Meshed Ali, evidently regretted the discourtesy paid to such a holy man. But at the first *khan* we stopped at, to change our team and give those who wished it an opportunity to drink tea and coffee, the *seyyid* came up again, and, walking round to us, gravely wished us "Good-morning" in very fair English. The sun was on the point of setting, but that was a mere detail. Here was a surprise for us in the desert. Of course, we returned his greeting, and he entered into conversation with us, although his English vocabulary was limited to two or three words. He inquired after the British consul in Baghdad, and then asked if Lord Curzon was quite well. We replied that we believed he was, although we had not seen him very lately; for it was very evident that our new acquaintance would not understand that we had not the honour of knowing His Excellency; his remarks showed that he felt quite confident that since we came from "Londra" we must be old friends of "Lor' Curzon." He told us that the distinguished

traveller had stayed at his house at Hillah, and wished us to present his greetings when next we met. Then he pressed us to become his guests, but as he was going on to Hillah, we had to decline, and he left us, after wishing us "Good-morning" again. After he had gone, Nasir gravely remarked that he must be mad, since no man of his rank and sanctity would demean himself by shaking hands with unbelievers and drinking tea with them. An agreeable remark from your servant!

The *khan* at which this incident occurred was quite a new building, owned by the Persian *arabanah* company, remarkably well built and clean, and the tea served there was delicious. Undoubtedly this Persian company is a blessing to travellers, but it has its drawbacks. We found the officials an impertinent lot, and were pestered by them at every stopping-place. At the second *khan* the agent was for turning out our *zaptieh*, declaring that although we had paid for the sole use of the carriage, we had no right to have a *zaptieh* with us. He demanded our ticket, but we declined to hand it to him, although we produced it for his inspection; and when he became impudent, we threatened to report him at headquarters and secure his dismissal. Thereupon he went away, muttering threats of vengeance and commiserating our coachman on having to drive two infidels. This talk bore fruit later on, for the *zaptieh* proved a helpless sort of individual, and the driver saw that he could try on any little bluff he might wish

with safety. Apparently he wanted to get a friend of his own up on the box-seat for a chat, and meant to have his way by hook or by crook.

At this second *khan* two of the *arabanahs* turned off to Hillah, and five others from Hillah joined us for Kerbellah. The going was simply terrible, for there is no pretence at road-making, and the only signs of anything like a track were the deep ruts worn in the softer places by the wheels of the *arabanahs*. Up and down we jolted and galloped through the darkness, trying hard the while to snatch a few minutes' sleep, but trying in vain. The pace was extremely good, considering the ground we were going over, for we did most of it at a gallop, only halting when necessary to allow the waggons to draw together. Once or twice our driver shot at jackals as they scurried off in the darkness, and once I fancy he wounded one, but we were too tired to pay much heed to such things.

Suddenly we came to a halt. Rousing myself from my drowsy state I heard the driver demanding that the *zaptieh* should give up his seat to a man who stood by the waggon-side. Daoud tried to silence the fellow, whereupon he drew his pistol and threatened to shoot if Daoud did not keep quiet. Then I joined in, and remarked that I had a revolver on me, and if any shooting, or further talk of shooting, took place, I should make use of it. The *zaptieh* was all for peace, and anxious to change places with the stranger; but I told him that if he got down, he should not

have a piastre of *backsheesh*, and the driver should certainly not take up his friend. Then, seeing how the land lay, our escort plucked up heart, and told the driver to drive on. At first he declined and was very abusive. I told him that as soon as we reached Kerbellah I should report his conduct to the British consular agent. He jeered, and said that he did not care for that, and that he did not want *backsheesh* from *firenghis*. I made the obvious retort that he need not trouble himself on that score, since he would certainly not get it after such conduct; and I added that he must take his choice between driving on at once, or getting off the *arabanah*, and leaving us to take it on to Kerbellah. He was very quick-tempered and very brazen, but this offer nonplussed him. He drove off without another word, and although he was extremely sulky at first, he gave us no further trouble. The next morning, as we approached Kerbellah, he tried to conciliate us; but feeling that such conduct could not be passed over, we declined to have anything to say to him. The end of the matter was that I reported him to our consular agent, who took the matter up vigorously, and the impudent fellow got a good bastinadoing for his pains. It is to be hoped that he will be more civil to any *firenghis* whom he may meet in future.

XV

AT daybreak we found ourselves passing through the cultivated lands which surround Kerbellah. We were heartily glad to catch sight of the imposing domes of Meshed Hussein, for the experience of the night, with the lack of sleep and the trouble with the coachman, had thoroughly sickened us of the *arabanah*.

The city struck us at once as far more attractive than Nejef. The streets on the outskirts were broad, and laid out at right angles to one another, instead of twisting and turning in the usual fashion of the Oriental street. Many of them actually had sidewalks, and some of them were planted with trees. The houses looked smarter and cleaner than those of most Turkish towns, and altogether, the place had a well-to-do air, and reminded me strongly of Damascus.

We put up at a *khan* kept by one Mullah Obeid, agent of the Baghdad *arabanah* company, who had been employed at Nippur ten or twelve years previously. At the close of the work the Mullah had been engaged as personal servant by Mr. Field, with the idea of going to America, but at Constantinople he had turned back, and we

had often heard our men talking of the enormous *backsheesh* he had received from his master on leaving. Nasir, especially, had given glowing accounts of this wealth, and I strongly suspected that it was in hopes of similar good fortune that he had accompanied Mr. Fisher. But the worthy agent seemed embarrassed at meeting us, never asked after his old master, and was altogether so strange in his manner that we concluded that they had parted under strained circumstances. I still wonder whether the Mullah really received any large sum from his master, or whether he took French leave. However, he was civil enough to us, and gave us two of the best rooms in the *khan*, and we carefully avoided asking him any awkward questions.

Our first care was to call on the British Consular Agent, the Nawab Mohammed Ibrahim Khan. He lives in one of the largest and finest houses in the city, over which the Union Jack flies proudly, and he certainly represents our country worthily. When we told him of our coachman's conduct and the contempt he had expressed for our threats to report him, the Nawab promised to see that he was properly punished, which was duly done in the manner already narrated. And although the bastinado may seem a severe punishment for such an offence, it must be borne in mind that if such conduct as that of the *arabanchi* were passed over unnoticed, it would certainly bring all European travellers into contempt. The Nawab informed us that it would be utterly impossible for us to

charter an *arabanah* to take us to Hillah or Musseiyib within the next four days, as every one of them had been booked in advance by the pilgrims returning from the Moharrem celebrations. He advised us therefore to go to Musseiyib by boat, and kindly offered to see that we got a good *sefinah* that same evening. He also arranged for a telegram to be sent to the *mudir* of Musseiyib, asking that an *arabanah* should be secured to take us on to Baghdad if possible. Finally, he sent a *cawass* with us to take us round the bazaars and show us the mosque, as well as providing for an escort of *zaptiehs*.

We found the bazaars uncommonly well stocked, the variety of piece-goods being especially noticeable; and we saw several splendid native costumes and weapons. But the most typical things were the plaited straw and grass goods—such as cigarette cases, baskets, bags, and covers for plates and dishes, and some diminutive pouches for holding sweetmeats or fruit—and the *turba* or "prayer-stones." These latter are of various shapes and sizes, and are moulded from a light-coloured clay which is found in the neighbourhood. Some of them have verses from the Koran stamped upon them, while others have conventional arabesque patterns and designs. They are highly esteemed as souvenirs of the holy city, and almost all pilgrims take home several of them as presents for their friends. They are often used as prayer-stones by their possessors, who when praying place them on the ground before them and touch them with

their foreheads in the course of their bowings and genuflexions. They are very cheap, and Nasir was able to buy us specimens of every shape and size for a few piastres; for we thought it better to let him do the bargaining for us than to try to buy them ourselves.

Another use which is made of the clay is to mould it into beads. Nearly every Turk or Arab carries a string of beads which he fingers nervously when conversing. Some of these beads are valuable, being made of fine amber; others are made of glass or wood; and the clay ones from Kerbellah are much esteemed on account of their origin.

Besides the prayer-stones and plaited straw goods, we made Nasir buy us several pairs of curious heelless slippers which are so largely worn by the native ladies. Kerbellah is famous for them, and we were able to get them cheap and of very pretty colours, bronze, purple, red, and green.

As at Nejef, we were only permitted to look upon the great shrine from its doorways, but we were able to form a fairly good idea of it from glimpses thus obtained. It is very much larger than Meshed Ali, and its tile-work seemed to me finer and more harmonious in tone, although less gorgeous. Especially beautiful was a pendant bit in a vaulting of the chief gateway, which was a gem of colouring and design. There is also some beautiful tiling on a small minaret which stands in the centre of the courtyard and is called the Slave's Minaret, because it is said to have been

built by a freed slave. The gold plating on the large minarets descends only as far as the *muezzin's* gallery. We did not visit the cemetery, but according to all traveller's accounts it is even larger than the one at Nejef. After we had seen all we could, we returned to the *khan*, and allowed the servants to go off to the mosque. In the meantime we had a meal sent in from a neighbouring eating-house, and found it excellent. There were all sorts of savoury vegetable-messes and spicy meat dishes, and the charge for it all was extremely moderate. These eating-houses, or rather, cook-shops, are quite a new feature in Kerbellah, I fancy, but they get plenty of custom from the pilgrims.

In the afternoon we had the small excitement of chasing a snake in the corridor of the *khan*. He escaped through a hole in the flooring, but soon reappeared, and as he showed an inclination to favour us with his company, we had to be on the watch to avoid treading on him. I cannot say whether it was of a poisonous variety, but the *khan* servants showed considerable fear of it, and warned us against interfering with it. The strange notions that Arabs hold regarding snakes are astonishing, and I have met educated Turks who firmly believe in snakes which can fly, and others that can dissolve themselves into nothingness at will!

Just before sunset we left the *khan* and made our way through the city to the canal, where the *sefinah* was ready for us. As we went, we got

glimpses of the older part of the town, where there are some very picturesque houses and quaint alleys and passages. By the way, it should be said that the city walls are in a very ruinous state, having been allowed to fall into decay after the bombardment of the place by the Turks when they took it in the middle of last century. But the outskirts of the town are really beautiful. There are some lovely gardens and groves beyond the walls, and the Husseineyah canal supplies an abundance of water. Besides palms, orange trees, *nebbek*, lemon and mulberry trees are plentiful, and there is a great deal of corn land. The whole scene presented a most refreshing contrast to the glare of the desert through which we had so lately passed; and we should have been well content to spend a few days in the city had time permitted our doing so. The Kerbellese struck us as more courteous and pleasant than the people of Nejef; and although a large number of them were Persians, they belonged to a better class than the majority of the pilgrims.

Our new *zaptieh* was one of the smartest and best of his kind that we had seen, and proved a well-behaved, intelligent fellow. His uniform was conspicuously clean and actually fitted him, and his rifle and accoutrements were all brightly polished and in good order. The *sefinah* also was a very spick-and-span looking craft, which contrasted most agreeably with the old tub in which we had gone from Hillah to Kufa. She was neatly painted and very clean; her white lateen sail was decorated

with a gorgeous device in red and green; and she sported a green pennant at her masthead. The crew, too, were all swells of a high order, the *nokador* being especially gorgeous in a silk *ziboon* and patent-leather boots. In fact, we felt quite ashamed of our shabby travel-stained appearance in such stylish company; and were rather troubled at the thought of the big *backsheesh* such magnificence would entail.

The gardens extended three or four miles along the banks of the canal, and as we were towed along, the tow-rope continually brought down showers of white mulberries into the boat from the trees overhead. These we ate and found excellent for the greater part, but some were not quite ripe. After we had passed beneath a brick bridge, where we had to lower our mast, the gardens were replaced by high sandy banks, behind which lay the bare desert; and there being no more for us to see we lay down on our beds spread out in the bottom of the boat. Daoud and Nasir were practising what little English they had picked up, and trying to teach the *zaptieh* the difference between "horse" and "house," and I was just dozing off, when suddenly I felt something cold crawling over my hand. In my sleepy state I made a grab and caught it; and when Nasir brought the lamp I found that I had caught a centipede. The *nokador*, servants, and *zaptieh* cried to me in chorus to throw the thing overboard at once, which I did. Then they all assured me that if it had stung me I was as good as

dead; but I felt no ill effects from it, and conclude that it had not stung me at all. Throughout the night we slept fairly well, and when we awoke the next morning we found that by steady poling and towing we had arrived almost within sight of our destination. It was good to be on the river again, and when the morning mist cleared away we were rejoiced to see the minarets of Musseiyib quite close at hand. Soon afterwards we were tied up just below the bridge. When we had had our goods and chattels carried to a neighbouring *khan*, we paid off the crew. The captain was wonderfully polite, and expressed a fervent hope that we would hire his boat if ever we came to those parts again, which we promised to do.

The *khan* to which we went was owned by a Jew, and being new was very clean. It offered a fine example of the wonderful arching and vaulting in brickwork that is done by the builders of those parts, but it was very slightly constructed, and already gave signs of falling in at more than one place. Some Jewish travellers were rather unceremoniously turned out of a room for our accommodation, and the ladies of the party made a great fuss over such treatment, especially one beldame who came over and scolded at our servants in a most voluble way. Afterwards the younger women, overcoming their bashfulness, came across to stare at us and indulge in light banter with Daoud. Nasir was highly shocked by their levity, and declined to have anything to do with the

fair ones, but to us he made some uncomplimentary remarks upon the freedom of their manners, comparing them unfavourably with those of Mohammedan ladies.

While we broke our fast, we sent the *zaptieh* to the *serai*, to inquire if an *arabanah* had been secured for us. He returned with the unpleasant information that not one was to be had; for although the *mudir* had received a telegram from Kerbellah asking him to engage one on our behalf, he had been unable to do so. This was very aggravating, for we noticed several standing by the bridge, and had felt confident that we should be able to get one of them; but it appeared that they were all engaged by the pilgrims, and all that the *mudir* could do was to telegraph to Baghdad for one to be sent to us. This offer we refused, as it would have meant a serious loss of time; and after having come so far in haste, we did not wish to be kept waiting on the last stage of our journey. The *mudir* sent a polite message asking us to call on him and take lunch; but we determined to press on at once, and therefore declined his invitation with thanks.

No price would tempt the *arabanah* drivers to take us, although we offered to compensate their passengers for loss of time and inconvenience, so we were driven to take animals. But neither horses nor mules were to be had for love or money, and nothing remained for us to do but to hire donkeys. Accordingly, seven donkeys were engaged, which were all that could be found, and our baggage was packed on them as best it could be. They were

very small animals, and when we looked at them with their heavy loads on, we almost despaired of their ever reaching Baghdad. But their owners promised that before the next morning we should be there, although it was a forty-mile journey and it would be quite out of the question for us to travel through the heat of the day over the scorching plain.

Our paragon of *zaptiehs* left us, to return to Kerbellah; and in his stead we got a surly old fellow, who was hardly at the pains to conceal his disgust at having to escort a company of donkey riders. We left the town at ten minutes past three, and by dint of sharp travelling reached Khan Skanderieh at five o'clock, where we stopped for three-quarters of an hour to rest our poor donkeys and refresh ourselves with tea. It is a very tumble-down place and in a filthy condition. Grouped around the *khan* are a few miserable hovels and a couple of coffee-shops, but the whole scene is one of poverty and neglect. It is a very rare thing for travellers to make any but the briefest stop at the place, because it is so close to Musseiyib.

The ride to Khan Mahmoudieh, where we struck the caravan route from Hillah to Baghdad, was as uncomfortable as it could be. Our animals had no saddles, bridles, or stirrups, and their jogging gait was extraordinarily painful. Indeed, we felt so stiff and sore when we alighted at Mahmoudieh that it was impossible for us to walk for some minutes. The track lay over an absolutely barren plain, gravelly for a great part and hot as a furnace.

Absolutely bare of vegetation and monotonously level, the country looked depressingly desolate. Overhead the sun appeared to hang motionless, and the scorched earth reflected his rays in stifling heat. It was a marvel that the donkeys could travel at any pace at all under such circumstances; but it was out of the question for us to walk in the heat; and we had to stick on and bear it all as best we could. As is usually the case with every caravan, one of the donkeys was lame, and it was revolting to see the donkey boys raining blows upon him unmercifully to keep him on the move. At last we could stand it no longer, and I told them that if they beat the poor animal again they should not have a para of *backsheesh* at the journey's end. They looked at me as if they thought me mad, but the threat had its effect, and the poor animal was spared further blows for the rest of the journey. The very birds seemed overcome with the heat, and we often rode through flocks of beautiful green and orange plumaged ones (orioles, I believe), which hardly troubled to get out of the way of our animals, and sat gasping for air. The flies sought shelter under our helmets, where they stung and bit us; and the only things that did not seem to feel the heat were the camels, of which we passed two or three caravans going light, and our donkey boys, who ran the greater part of the way and sang their unmelodious songs incessantly.

We reached Mahmoudieh at about half-past eight, and at once made our way to a small *khan* at which we had stopped on our way down to Niffer,

where we got a good room and made ourselves as comfortable as the heat would permit us to do. But sleep was out of the question in such a temperature and with the myriads of flies that were there. Moreover, the squealing of the animals in the courtyard below, the jangling of the mule-bells, and the shouting of the muleteers would have aroused the Seven Sleepers themselves. The *khanchi* came to us soon after our arrival, and professed to be very indignant that we should have been compelled to ride on donkeys. "Where are your own fine horses that you rode down to Hillah?" he asked. And when we told him that we had been unable to keep them at Niffer because of the Arabs (who were said to be great horse-thieves), he declared that he himself would lend us horses for the remainder of our journey. Of course, it was empty talk, and we replied that having come so far we would go on to Baghdad on our humble mounts. He smiled in bland amusement at the *firenghis* whims, and went off. Next we had a disturbance with some impudent Persians, who wanted to turn our donkeys out of their places in order to fasten their own horses there. They probably judged us by our animals, but quickly found out their mistake, and had to sing small for the rest of the day. Our tempers had been sorely tried by our morning's experience, and so picking out the biggest swashbuckler of the lot, we applied every abusive epithet we could think of to him. He became furious and threatened us, whereupon we told him that if he said another word we would have him whipped at

Baghdad, as we had had his countryman at Kerbellah. The story of that affair had been handed on by the *zaptiehs*, and it proved sufficient to cool down our excitable gentleman, who slunk off amidst the jeers of our donkey boys and the onlookers. The Persians are never popular with the Arabs, and although these fellows were travelling in grand style, their discomfiture was keenly relished by all who witnessed it.

When at last the sun set I hoped to get some sleep; but I found it impossible to do so, owing to the cats and dogs which were prowling about all over the roof and terraces of the *khan*. So I stood sentry over our belongings while the rest of our party slept. It was well I did so too, for our Persian friends hung about our baggage in a very suggestive way. At about four o'clock I heard the sounds of the first caravan making ready to start as soon as the moon should rise, and immediately roused our folk up. In twenty minutes we had all ready, our score with the *khanchi* was settled, and we got outside. There we found the road black with a vast crowd of pilgrims, which stretched away far into the plain beyond the village. The moon was only just rising, and in the dim light it was impossible to see the end of the long line, which seemed to extend for miles on either side of the place.

It was truly an interesting spectacle. At a moderate estimate there must have been nearly four thousand pilgrims in the caravan, with a sprinkling of *zaptiehs*, who were hectoring the muleteers of

different parties in fine style, and using their whips and the butt-end of their rifles freely in trying to clear paths for their own parties through the throng. The pilgrims were mounted on horses, mules, or donkeys, according to their preferences or the length of their purses. Some of the wealthiest lolled luxuriously in *takhtrawans*, and here and there were veiled ladies travelling in panniers slung in pairs over powerful mules, or in the cage-like *mahmil*; while others of the fair sex rode horses or mules, sitting hunched up in a very inelegant fashion, with their knees drawn almost up to their chins. The animals were jostling each other excitedly and fighting with teeth and heels to keep their places, to the imminent peril of their riders; and combats between the stallions were of frequent occurrence. Now and again the cries of some distressed lady, separated from her companions or alarmed by the antics of her animal, made themselves heard above the din; and everywhere rival muleteers were cursing each other and their struggling animals in the thorough manner they use on such occasions.

The caravan spread far on either side of the track, and it looked well-nigh hopeless for us to try to get ahead of the crowd on our jaded donkeys. But those plucky little animals answered gallantly to the call we made upon their powers; in a quarter of an hour we had galloped clear of the throng; and gradually the jangling of the bells, the hoarse cries of the men, and the shrill voices of the women-folk died away behind us. Then came a

fatiguing six hours. Owing to want of sleep I was pretty well tired out, and the others were in much the same state. We had to walk a good deal in order to keep awake at all; and we stumbled about like drunken men over the uneven ground in the deceptive moonlight. At one time, when Mr. Fisher and I had outwalked the party and lost sight of them behind some mounds, we had a shock which woke us up completely for a while. Suddenly from out of the darkness, there loomed up a caravan of camels swaying silently towards us; and from the mass several cavaliers detached themselves and came trotting towards us, faster than we had ever seen camel riders move before—or so it seemed to us then. Apparently they thought we were a couple of stray pilgrims, for they struck up a *hoseh* and came towards us brandishing their guns and spears. When they reached us they were evidently astounded to find a couple of *firenghis* on foot, and apparently alone, out in the desert at such a time. While they halted in a circle about us, undecided what to make of such a phenomenon, our *zaptieh* came riding up at full gallop; and the sound of approaching caravan bells showed that there were other travellers at hand; so with a laughing greeting the Bedouin went on their way, singing their *hoseh* again. Our *zaptieh* begged us not to go on so far ahead again by ourselves, declaring that we ran the risk of being attacked and robbed. Whether the party who had just passed us would really have robbed us or not it would be hard to say, but I fancy that any unprotected pilgrims

might have fared badly. The *firenghi*, however, is not considered a safe person to take liberties with near Baghdad; for it is known that his consul generally stirs up the sluggish machinery of the law to some effect in such cases.

Towards morning we got quite light-headed, but a halt at a coffee-shop revived us, and we were able to push on at a better pace. On the *sud*, or embankment, which leads from the Ker Bridge into Baghdad, we saw a line of carriages waiting, and learned that they were there to meet H.H. Prince Firman Firma, brother-in-law of the Shah, who resides in Baghdad, and had been visiting Kerbellah during the Moharrem. It was probably on account of this that we had been unable to procure *arabanahs* anywhere.

What a relief it was to catch sight of the gilded dome and minarets of the beautiful mosque of Kazimaim! Always a fine sight, they seemed to our tired eyes simply magnificent as they caught the first rays of the rising sun. Soon afterwards we were able to make out some of the minarets and domes of Baghdad, lying in the midst of the palm gardens; then we found ourselves in a crowd of market people hastening to the city to sell their produce. There were women carrying jars and bowls of milk, others with baskets of vegetables or bundles of grass. Men were driving donkeys laden with fuel and hides, and amongst the crowd a few pleasure-makers taking the morning air on horseback. Amongst the latter I recognised several acquaintances, who expressed a lively surprise at

A STREET IN THE "EUROPEAN QUARTER," BAGHDAD.

the appearance we cut on our disreputable donkeys; and many of the passers-by were liberal with their chaff. But we were so near our journey's end that we cared nothing for their remarks.

At half-past ten we alighted at a *khan* on the west bank of the Tigris, where we paid off our donkey boys and gave them a liberal *backsheesh*, which they and their plucky little animals had well earned. Then we hired a *goupha* and were paddled down the river to the house of Mr. Blockey, our friend, who very kindly put us up. And so our wanderings were happily ended for a while. All our friends were surprised to hear how quickly we had done the journey, and how little trouble we had encountered at a time when fanaticism might have been expected to run high in the sacred cities. For our own part, we were delighted to find that our exertions had not been thrown away, for there were no tidings of the party from Hillah.

Altogether the success of the trip far outweighed its discomforts, and we heartily congratulated ourselves upon having undertaken it and carried it through so well as we did.

XVI

I HAVE been over the road between Baghdad and Deir twice. On the first occasion, we struck across country from Deir to Palmyra and Damascus; on the second, we went north, to Aleppo and Alexandretta. The first time, we left Baghdad on 24th March, arrived at Deir on the 7th of April, left again on the 8th, and reached Damascus on the 20th. The second time, we left Baghdad on 7th June, arrived at Deir on the 22nd, left on the 24th, and reached Aleppo on the 2nd of July.

The second journey was trying, for, by reason of the great heat, we travelled chiefly by night; and night travel is tedious even when you are favoured by the splendid moonlight, while to stumble across the stony plain on a jaded caravan animal through pitchy darkness is an experience of which you soon have enough. Yet, if I had to choose between the sea route and the land one again, I should certainly take the latter at any time of the year, for as I look back upon those two caravan trips they seem well worth the trouble and discomfort they entailed. It would be hard to put down in black and white just what constitutes the charm of such travel, but most people who have done caravan work appear to have experienced its fascination.

In this chapter I purpose giving a brief description of the road between Baghdad and Deir, chiefly as I first saw it in 1896.

After many provoking delays, Mr. Duncan, Mr. Haynes, and I got away from Baghdad two days later than Mr. Cree and Mr. Clark, who had promised to travel slowly so that we might be able to overtake them. Our caravan consisted of fifteen animals under the charge of three muleteers, and on the first stage we were escorted by a couple of *zaptiehs*. Owing to the recent floods, the ground was spongy and sodden, and we were compelled to make use of the dykes as far as possible, which entailed many detours, so that it was two days before we reached Feloodjah. There the bridge had been washed away, and we had to get ourselves and our beasts ferried across the river in one of the flat-bottomed boats which had served as a pontoon of the ruined structure. There is nothing to call for notice about the village except a *khan* with five octagonal upper chambers with umbrella-like roofs, such as I do not remember having seen anywhere else in the country. The third day's travelling commenced with a half-hour's ride through mud and water, but then the aspect of the country improved rapidly. The land was fairly well cultivated, and everywhere we came across large flocks of sheep and goats. Twice in the day we had to stop while causeways were hastily thrown across canals rather too large for fording or jumping; and at one of these places the mule that was carrying our bedding and photographic supplies fell into the water and soaked its

load through and through, being extricated only by the united efforts of the *zaptiehs* and muleteers. However, when we reached Roumadieh, we soon had the things dried in the sun, and they were little the worse for their wetting. The incident was typical of many which befell us throughout the journey, for caravan animals appear to take a malicious delight in getting into difficulties; and it must be added that the muleteers usually show a good deal of ingenuity in extricating their charges from such messes. Roumadieh is small, but very clean. Travellers usually camp in the market-place, before the *serai*, and there we found Messrs. Cree and Clark awaiting us. Like ourselves, they had experienced stormy weather, but from this point onwards we had little rain.

After a slight hitch about the number of *zaptiehs* our united caravans ought to have, we got away at sunrise the next morning, accompanied by some dozen pilgrims from India, who were travelling on foot and appeared totally unprovided for such a journey as they were undertaking. It is possible to reach Hit in one day from Roumadieh, but both times that I have been over the road the muleteers have made two days of it. Above Roumadieh the country takes on a different aspect. The plain is undulating, and gypsiferous rock crops up here and there. But still cultivation is carried on wherever the soil is sufficient to support a crop. The Arabs declare that this is an unsafe part of the road, but we saw no signs of robbers anywhere, although there are one or two ideal spots for an ambush to

be laid. About three hours outside Hit the road winds through a small pass and over rocks where mica crops up, touches the river at one spot, and then winds over a gravel plain and through another miniature gorge. Then the smell of pitch tells you that you are approaching the quaint little town itself.

In marked contrast to most of the towns and villages upon the Euphrates between Hillah and Deir, the "City of Pitch" strikes you more unfavourably at a distance than it does upon a closer acquaintance. Thick smoke hangs over it; in the air is a peculiar smell, such as one associates with the neighbourhood of chemical factories; and like the environs of a Black Country city, the ground around Hit appears black and seared, and is dotted with heaps of cinders and furnace refuse. In summer the town lies blistering and warping beneath the scorching sun, swathed in smoke and sulphurous stenches; and in the wet season its sodden houses seem to be crumbling away and falling to bits before your eyes.

The town stands upon a mound, or series of mounds, formed by the débris of former buildings, and its houses are built of small stones and plastered with mud and bitumen. Windows are few and small, and the appearance of the whole place suggests that it is built for defence against the raids of the Bedouin.

Everywhere is the smell of bitumen. It greets you an hour before you reach Hit, and it clings to you long after you have left the place behind you.

To the presence of its bituminous springs the town owes its existence, and its inhabitants from time immemorial have all been employed directly or indirectly in gathering, manipulating, or exporting the much-prized material. In buildings of the earliest period at Nippur we found bitumen laid for damp-courses and as a lining in aqueducts; in all cases where the maximum of durability was required it was used instead of mortar, and the tenacious resistance it offered to the picks and scrapers of our workmen bore witness to its lasting qualities; and the same story is repeated at Hillah, at Birs Nimroud, at Tello, and at every other ancient site in Babylonia. Ctesiphon and Seleucia add their testimony to its utility, and the tale is carried on in the early buildings of Baghdad. Nowadays, builders use it less liberally, on account of its cost, substituting perishable mud mortar throughout their walls; but they still employ it occasionally as a waterproof covering for roofs and pavements; and for coating the pontoons of bridges, for boats and *gouphas*, and for a thousand and one other purposes, it is in steady demand. One of Nature's most valuable gifts to the country, it is highly prized and made the most of by the people. The chief springs lie close to the modern town, on the west side, in the midst of a black and barren plain through which trickle many salty springs. Most of the pitch is obtained from two springs, one warm, and the other cold, which belong to the Government. The cold one, which produces most bitumen, is let out to any one who wishes to hire it,

at the rent of one *mejideh* and one piastre *sarq* for three days. It lies in a kind of miniature crater, in a mound of black, clinker-like stones, where the water bubbles up in two little fountains, carrying the bitumen with it. Gathered by hand from the surface of the pool, the plastic pitch is put into baskets which are borne by donkeys, and so carried off to the town or to the furnaces where it is prepared for use in the boat-building yards. The spring is intermittent in its action, and the last time I saw it very little bitumen was rising; but the old *zaptieh* who was acting as my cicerone told me proudly: "This spring works every day of every month, all the year round, *effendi*, and the *gheer* is taken to Busreh, to Nejef, to Baghdad—everywhere, all over the world." On the surface of the salt streams floats much tarry and oily matter, often of really beautiful violet and blue hues, and their banks and the neighbouring rocks are coated and seamed with bituminous deposits. That oil can be readily obtained by boring I have no doubt at all, and if the Germans ever exploit the place, they are likely to find it pay them well. Coarse salt of a poor quality is obtained by means of evaporation in a series of pans at a point where one of the streams is dammed up.

From the vicinity of the springs the little town looks most effective. The mound upon this side is quite precipitous, and the buildings rise abruptly from its edge. Several tombs of departed sheikhs are scattered over the desert, perched upon isolated rocks and mounds; and the *zaptiehs* point out to

you a minaret lying some two or three miles distant, saying that it is a remnant of "the old town." To the south of the village, and not far from the river lies another spring, of a different character. It produces no bitumen, but is said to possess wonderful medicinal properties. Said my *zaptieh*: "If you are sick, *effendi*, bathe here and you will be cured. If you are well, a bath will still improve your skin and soften it." He had just told me that camels and other animals were brought there to be dipped when they were sick, and that the water was efficacious in curing them also. I looked at the pool. It was not attractive, and I decided to dispense with a beauty bath.

North and south of the town are numerous date orchards, irrigated by little mud-banked aqueducts. Moored beneath the trees lie crude barges and punts, laden with lime and bitumen. Up-stream a palm-covered eyot dots the broad bosom of splendid Euphrates. On the farther bank shine golden sand-dunes, behind which the flat country stretches away to the horizon in a series of yellows, greens, blues, and purples. Altogether, the locality improves on acquaintance, there is no doubt of it; and to see it as I saw it, by moonlight, after a great storm, with heavy clouds scudding overhead, and the shadows lying black on the silvery wet plain below, is worth the trouble of the caravan journey.

But all you can notice for some time is the pitch. It permeates the place and defies you to ignore it. Turn where you will you are met by the smell and sight of it. The houses are daubed with pitch; the

SMOKE SWATHED HIT,

water-jars which the women bring from the town to fill at the river are made of reeds and covered with pitch; the *magwarr* that every man has thrust through his girdle is headed with pitch; the very children make clumsy little dolls and figures of animals from pitch; and on all sides of you are coppers for refining the stuff. These coppers, or furnaces, are built of stone, and consist of one, two, or three boiling pans over an arched fireplace. The fireplace has a door at one side, and a chimney at the other, and the fuel used in it is camel-thorn, vegetable refuse, and a small quantity of inferior pitch. During the process of boiling, the bitumen is well stirred and slightly skimmed with short hooked sticks, and when it is ready for use it is ladled into bowls and baskets and taken off to the yards.

Some of the craft constructed in the ship-building yards of Hit are fearful and wonderful to look upon, but, considering the indifferent materials they have to work with, the builders show great ingenuity in their trade. The only timber they can obtain for the framework of the boats is in the form of twisted roots and slender saplings and boughs, which no Western shipwright would dream of trying to use. The boats have flat sides and slightly rounded ends, and the bottoms, as a rule, are quite flat. The bottom is first formed of a framework of saplings and roots, and upon this a thatch of grass, reeds, and palm leaves is secured. It is then coated on both sides with bitumen. The sides are made in a similar manner. The frame-

work, made of more twisted poles, roots, and branches, is tied together with thin but very tough ropes of rushes; and the frames of the sides are usually tenoned on to the frame of the bottom as well as tied. When the bottom and sides have been put together, struts are fastened across the boat, a gunwale is put on, and the deck (if any) is built over the struts. It may be imagined that these boats are not very rigid, but they are remarkably light, cost little to build, and are in great demand.

On its shipbuilding yards and its export trade the town thrives fairy well, but the people appear to be lazy and lacking in enterprise to a degree astonishing even in Turkey. Both times that I have visited the place the governor has been absent, "collecting taxes." Possibly his energy accounts for the lack of the quality in his people. Or is it that the *jann* have cast a spell over the place? For *jann* there are in the desert that hems the little town in on the west. I have it on the authority of a resident—a man of discrimination, a *zaptieh*, and therefore impeccable!

The desert is always impressive; but behind Hit it is more than that. "Vast" and "forbidding" are poor words to describe it. If once you saw it you would understand immediately how inevitably legends and strange stories must gather round such a spot. It looks exactly like what one imagines the threshold of a land of lost spirits must do. And therefore I found it quite easy to believe all that the impeccable *zaptieh* told me about the *jann* and

the territory which nobody would think seriously of disputing with them.

He commenced by informing me that at a point some nine or ten hours' journey from Hit there was in the desert a very large spring, which had covered the plain for miles with a thick deposit of bitumen. When I asked why nobody had exploited the place, he replied that it was "a very bad spot," where many *jann* lived, and that everybody who sought to approach it was "swallowed up in the pitch" as in a quagmire. When the *jann* set such traps, who would venture into their territory?—Let the German railway and exploitation syndicate beware!

Then came a story of a hunter who went out into the wilds to seek gazelle and wandered into the neighbourhood of this curious spring. There he saw "a most wonderful white beast," which he chased for many hours. Finally, the creature escaped into a subterranean passage, where the huntsman feared to follow it, for its swiftness of foot and its endurance had convinced him that it was supernatural. My informant could give no detailed description of this creature, for he had not asked the hunter for one, and—of course—he would scorn to invent one. But in the entrance to the cave the man had found some of the animal's white fur, wonderfully long and silky, which he brought home as evidence of the truth of his story; and subsequently he sold the stuff "for a great price, to some Jews and *firenghis* at Busreh."

Another story was of a party of soldiers, sixteen in number, who went out into the desert, under a

bold captain "who feared neither man nor devil," to see if they could find anything or anybody to tax. (Happy Sultan, to be served by such enthusiasts!) The adventurous explorers never returned. The desert swallowed them up utterly. Undoubtedly they fell victims to the ferocious *jann*! The only people who can exist in that enchanted region are some very "wild Arabs, whose sole clothing consists of shirts of gazelle skins." They never come near Hit, and neither my *zaptieh* nor any other townsman had ever seen them. But he knew they were there. And so do I. Not for worlds would I lose my faith in that glorious region of romance. If ever I go to Hit again, I shall make a point of exploring the enchanted desert. I may not be fortunate enough to find the lost tax-gatherers, or to see the white-furred animal; but I do hope to see the great bitumen well, the "wild Arabs," and at least one *jinnee*.

Beyond Hit the road becomes rocky, and is continually ascending and descending the ridges which run off from the hills in the west to the river, so that the going is naturally slower than on the more level ground. Before you reach Baghdadieh, the first halting-place beyond Hit, you have to cross a creek at a ford. The next day's stage is equally up and down, and you have another creek to ford or travel round, as the case may be. This is a lovely spot, however, and worth going far to see. Shut in by magnificent red and yellow cliffs, in which thousands of brilliant-hued pigeons have their nests, its water is singularly clear and of a

beautiful peacock blue. Its banks are of clean shingle, which gradually gives way to patches of bright green grass, and a few young palms serve to make the charm of the picture complete. Under any circumstances the creek would command admiration, but coming upon it as you do from the desert, it looks like a bit of fairyland. The muleteers and *zaptiehs* say that at certain times of the year large shoals of fish come into the creek, when the natives catch great numbers of them, smoke them, and after pounding them up, make a kind of cake from them.

Haditha is beautifully placed, about an hour and a half's ride beyond the creek. It is flanked by high and rocky hills, in which there are some remarkable caves (apparently partly natural and partly of man's making), and opposite the village is a pretty islet covered with date palms. The valley is carefully cultivated, and the district appears to be flourishing. An amusing feature of the life of the place is the way in which everybody takes to the water. When a villager wishes to get from one bank to the other, or from a point up-stream to one lower down, he simply strips, ties his clothes in a bundle upon his head, and takes to the water, sometimes supporting himself by means of a dried gourd or float. Every other person you see has one of these floats tucked under his arm. Arrived at his destination the swimmer lands, quite unabashed at his nudity, slips into his clothes, without any thought of drying himself, and goes about his business.

The next station is Fehami, a tiny village, with

a well-built *zaptieh* barracks a little to the north of it. So that the place cannot be missed by travellers, two obelisks are erected on the plateau which the road traverses, to indicate the point at which caravans should turn off to the village. For it must be understood that the caravan route does not follow the river in its bends and twists, but cuts across in a more or less straight line from point to point. Between Fehami and Haditha the road is better than between the latter station and Baghdadieh ; but beyond Fehami it is very bad until it strikes the river bank, after which it keeps by the water until Anah is reached.

Anah is a straggling place, stretching nearly a mile along the right bank of the river. Its long street is crossed by many aqueducts, and the gardens, fields, and orchards are well watered and cultivated. Everywhere, on the banks of the water-courses, on the walls and all over the houses, a variety of maiden-hair fern grows wild, giving the place a beautiful appearance. The vegetation strikes you as luxuriant, after the desert, and the town appears prosperous and flourishing as towns upon the Euphrates go. There are three mosques in the place, one with a roof very like that of Sitta Zobeide at Baghdad, and we found the bazaar well stocked with fruit and provisions. The river here is shallow, but rapid, and is full of big shoals and small islets.

More than half of the date trees are dead, and on that account the place has a somewhat melancholy appearance, which is intensified by the number

of deserted houses. Indeed, when you ride through the long street at night and see the withered trees and the empty houses, you are likely to receive the impression that Anah is a village of the dead; and I shall always remember the uncanny feeling the scene inspired in me the second time I arrived there, when the faint moonlight made the whole look absolutely like a place of dreams. The people of the place pleased me. They were inquisitive, it is true, but they were well-mannered withal and remarkably obliging. As a rule, they were of a fairer complexion than most Arabs, had good features, splendid eyes, and a good bearing. Many of the women seemed quite pretty, and I certainly noticed none of that shyness which some travellers speak of as characteristic of them. In fact, bevies of damsels and matrons came and stared at us in quite an embarrassing fashion at times, and did not care whether they were veiled or not.

Beyond Anah you find very few date palms, and the country seems in consequence unfamiliar to you. On leaving the town you first ride beneath overhanging cliffs for some distance. There the lower strata are the softer, and consequently the rocks are much undercut and at places overhang the road in a way that is picturesque enough but seems decidedly dangerous for travellers; and, as at Haditha, there are numerous large caves running back into the bowels of the earth. From the plateau you obtain a fine view of the barracks of Rawa, standing on top of the bluffs on the left bank of the river, at a point where it almost doubles on

its course. The building looks imposing enough, thanks to its commanding position; and it shows some skill in its construction, massive buttresses being carried down on to the lower rocks of the cliffs at places; but it is almost deserted, only a few *zaptiehs* being stationed there now. To the south stands an *imam*, and to the north a pretty little hamlet, where there is a rope-ferry over the river.

In two hours or so after leaving Anah you pass the ruins of Mesh-ha-heda, about which the *zaptiehs* will probably tell you many stories if you listen sympathetically; thence you travel by a fairly easy road to Nahia, where there is a tumble-down and particularly filthy *khan*; and the next stage is to el-Kaim (or el-Ghayim), another *khan* and *zaptieh* station only.

The next stopping-place is Abu Kemal, a comparatively new village. When first I saw it, in '96, the whole place was in imminent danger of being washed away, as the river was fast cutting a new path for itself out of the western bank; but on my second visit I found a brand new village springing up on a site about a mile from the old one. This new place possessed such extraordinary features for a Euphrates townlet that I feel bound to notice it. Obviously it was the creation of its governor, who appears to be an enlightened man in the matter of laying out a town, and is evidently possessed of sufficient energy and force of character to carry out his ideas in face of almost hopeless difficulties. The place was laid out in broad streets, which were set out at right angles to one another, and instead

A BACKWATER AT ANAH.

of the flimsy mud hovels which you find elsewhere along the river, its buildings were of stone. The *serai* was a spick-and-span place, standing at the west side of what was evidently intended to be the principal square of the town.—For it must be clearly understood that when I was there the place was in an embryotic stage.—It was a wonderfully clean-looking building, very neatly constructed, and with all its windows glazed and provided with sun-shutters. Opposite it stood two or three fair-sized houses, one with a large *iwan* and one two-storeyed; and on the north of the square a completed street and the commencement of a second one showed what was the idea for the buildings of the town. Instead of being detached and lying back from the roadway, they were built in terraces, and boasted a dead-true frontage line—in itself a marvel for Turkey. The doors were neatly framed, and I noticed several of them covered with tin. The buildings were only one-storeyed (on the street front at least), but they seemed to be airy and to run back some distance, and were undoubtedly improvements upon the ordinary dwellings of the district.

It must be heart-breaking work for any man to try to plant civilisation in such a land. And it is difficult to see how the enterprising builder hopes to get his model town peopled. True, a majority of the buildings already erected appeared to be occupied, but there were several tents and wattle huts, lying on the south of the "square," whose occupants did not look as if they would ever be

able to afford the luxury of stone-built residences—even supposing they wished to. Nevertheless, I sincerely wish the governor luck in his endeavours after better things in the wilderness.

Beyond the town lies a "forest" of tamarisk, where gazelle and wild boar seem plentiful. At one part you pass through a really pretty glade, where the bushes are like small trees, and show such a variety of foliage that it is easy to imagine yourself in a true wood. Here also you may see a tall yellow flower, very much like the evening primrose but of a deeper colour, and quantities of beautiful pink and white anemones. And soon after emerging from this agreeably verdant region you come in sight of the *khan* by Salahieh, which is in the worst state of any building on the road.

North of the *khan*, upon a high bluff, stand some very fine ruins. The Turks call them Khan Kalessi. I visited them on both journeys, and they struck me as the most interesting ruins on the route. Certainly, when the Euphrates valley was the highroad to the rich lands in the south, the fortified town must have been of high importance, commanding, as it did, the approach to Mesopotamia both by river and road. It was placed between two ravines, which are on its north and south sides; on its west there is a strong wall; and on the east the steep cliffs were its best protection. But it appears that on all four sides there ran a wall, although that upon the west, which was the most likely direction for an attack, was naturally by far the strongest. By the ravines the rock has

been cut and dressed and the walling built up so skilfully that even now it is difficult to determine where the natural rock finishes and the masonry commences. At one point I noticed a portico on the edge of the cliff which had been blocked up after it was built—probably because it was a weak spot in the defences. Its existence suggests that originally there had been a platform outside the wall, since it is hardly likely that an opening would be left right upon the edge of the cliff; but the rock had fallen away at this part, as at many others, and great masses of it lay at the foot of the cliffs. The wall on the west is over half a mile long, and near its centre is the principal gate of the city. This structure was finely built. On either side of the opening stood a tower with two rooms on the ground floor and two on the first floor. From the top of the gate it is still an easy matter to make out the plan of the city, although only the foundations of the houses remain. From the entrance the principal street ran off in a straight line, with other smaller roads branching at right angles from it. To the north-east stood the citadel, which was defended by a splendidly built wall with heavy bastions and strong towers. A low gate, or sally-port, with openings on either side of its projections to command the length of walls by a cross-fire, indicates that in this direction there must have been an approach from the foot of the bluffs. At many parts of the buildings I saw places left in the walling to receive floor joists; and everywhere was abundant evidence that the builders of the place were no mean craftsmen. It is remark-

able that the site has not been explored scientifically, for it would surely repay investigation, and its situation is all that any man could desire to camp at. The view across the plain from the top of the cliffs is magnificent, with the river twining itself through thick tamarisk jungle below, and the hills offering plenty of delightful colouring. Altogether, I would commend the spot to anybody in search of a site for a little light excavating.

After Salahieh, the next stage is to Maydin. The road is bad at first, stone-strewn and slippery, but towards Maydin it improves. The place itself calls for no comment, but some little distance to the west of it are the ruins of Rehaba, a most interesting castle. They are in a good state of preservation and of a very picturesque aspect. The castle stands upon a mound over two hundred feet high, which, like that of the Aleppo citadel, is partly natural and partly artificial, being scarped away in places and faced with brick and stone. The ruins of the castle present half-a-dozen different forms of arching, and the brickwork of which their bulk is made up is of a peculiar key-pattern. Traces of a moat or canal run before the castle, and a winding approach originally led up to the citadel. Undefended as it now is, it is no easy business to find a way into the place, and when it was garrisoned it must have been well-nigh impregnable. A well within the walls, which is now choked up, formerly communicated with every storey of the building, so that the question of a water supply, which must have been literally a burning one in such a situation, was

evidently satisfactorily met. Ainsworth identifies the place with the Rehoboth of the Scriptures, other authorities differ from him on the point; but it certainly played an important part in the Arab history during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and withstood more than one determined siege.

From Maydin to Deir is the next stage, and although it is a somewhat long one the road is fairly good and level. Deir is quite a modern town, and strikes you as being a highly up-to-date place, after the unimportant, sleepy villages through which you have passed on your way from Baghdad. The sight of iron railings, of suburban-looking bay-windows, and still more suburban-looking fanlights over some of the doors, have an effect quite out of proportion to their importance; and when you see "West End Fashion Plates" hanging up in the tailors' shops, you are apt to feel as if you had stepped out of the last century into this one all too suddenly,—even though the said fashions be four or five years old,—and probably you want to step back again in a hurry. Personally, I was inclined to resent such proofs of civilisation, and to wish myself back in the desert; and I realised how the charm of its great wastes and solitudes, and of the unsophisticated riverside hamlets had got hold upon me, when I saw these signs of Western influence. It is, of course, purely a matter of temperament, and I suspect that the average Englishman would welcome the sight of the fashion plates with at least a secret sigh of relief.

XVII

DEIR is the most important town on the Euphrates between Busreh and the point at which you leave the river in striking across to Aleppo; while, if you are bound for Damascus, it is at Deir that you turn westward and commence your desert march. It is therefore usual for travellers who are not in too great a hurry to make a day's halt there; and it is certainly as well to do so, as it gives the caravan beasts a rest, and affords the muleteers a better opportunity to bargain for fodder. In the way of sights there is not much to interest the traveller who knows the country, but the new-comer is likely to find plenty of amusement in watching the life of the bazaars from the windows of his *khan*. As I have said, the town is a new one, although it appears that from quite early days a small settlement at this point has gone by the name of Deir ez-Zor (*i.e.* "Deir of Syria"). Of course, the word "deir," which means a convent, is found in many names in the country (*e.g.* Deir Mahariz, Deir el-Hafr).

The government of the place is in the hands of a *mutesarrif*, who occupies a semi-independent

position, being partly under the *wali* of Aleppo, and partly in direct communication with Constantinople. A garrison about a thousand strong is maintained there, but save for the officials there are very few Turks in the town. The bulk of its inhabitants are Arabs, but there are also small colonies of Syrian and Armenian Christians, and a few Jews and Greeks. The total population is about twelve thousand.

The town stands upon a branch of the river, which divides a little to the north of Deir, and is here spanned by a new stone bridge with iron railings. On the left bank there are few houses, but much of the land is laid out in gardens. In the town itself there is a "park" or public garden, also enclosed with iron railings, and iron bars are to be seen in front of several windows in private dwellings. This is noticeable because between Baghdad and Deir you never see ironwork used on any of the buildings. Another fact worthy of mention is that several of the chief streets are macadamised. The bazaars are roofed with wooden gable roofs, and many of the houses have sloping roofs instead of the flat tops that are universal farther south. The stalls are well stocked with fresh provisions and tinned goods; and travellers are able to obtain a change of diet by laying in a stock of *bulghour*, a preparation of half-cooked wheat, which is cheap and makes a welcome variety in the rather limited caravan menu. Manchester cotton goods are much in evidence, and cheap Austrian glass and chinaware, Italian

matches, and Regie cigarettes are well to the fore amongst the articles of foreign manufacture offered for sale. It is noticeable that the *kefiyehs* in greatest demand here are of darker colour than those popular in Baghdad; shirts made of very coarse, undyed natural wool are obtainable remarkably cheaply; and the *'agals* and *abbas* mostly in demand are of slightly different pattern from those of the south.

Naturally, the crossing from Deir to Damascus is seldom undertaken in the hot season, even by natives, but in the spring it is by no means difficult. We were fortunate in seeing the desert at its best. In many places there was fine succulent grass, which the animals could be driven past only with difficulty; and flowers grew at several points, some especially fine tulip-like ones having a delightful perfume.

Our stages were necessarily fixed for us by the absence of water save at certain spots, concerning which the *zaptiehs* and muleteers made careful inquiries all along the route. The first night we camped at a well of sweet water hardly three hours' journey from Deir; and there, as if to prove that the desert was not such a dry and thirsty place as it is usually represented, we had a brisk shower. The next two days we had stages of nine hours each, over a plain which certainly was deserted save for snakes, lizards, locusts, and a few Bedouin. At the end of the second stage we found a well beside a *khan*, but on the third we had to camp by a muddy pool of rain-water,

THE CITY GATE AT SALAHIEH.

where the animals struggled keenly for a drink, with the result of making the water as thick as pea-soup and far from palatable to us. The temperature varied greatly. On the second day it was stiflingly hot, and on the third bitterly cold.

Our next halt was made at Suchne, a poor and dirty village in a little oasis which is supported by several warm springs, one of fairly good water, but mostly strongly impregnated with sulphur, and exceedingly brackish. Considering what might be done if the people made an intelligent use of these springs to irrigate the land, it is surprising to see how they allow the precious water to run to waste. As it is, there are numerous fig trees, and with care the oasis could surely be turned into a flourishing place. But its people are content to subsist on the camel-carrying trade in Northern Syria. The camels are kept at Suchne, being turned out to pick up the best living they can in the desert. The village "mosque" is simply a circle of large stones, and we were amused to see the congregation driving a flock of goats out of the sacred building before they could commence their evening prayers.

After Suchne comes Erek, another village in an oasis, with two streams, one of really good water, which was a great treat to us. It compares most favourably with Suchne, and the surrounding scenery is fine. From this point Tadmor, or Palmyra, is almost in sight. But even when you do actually see the place, you find that it is farther away than

it looks. However, six and a half hours should bring you to the famous ruins.

So much has been written about the city of Queen Zenobia, that it would be superfluous for me to give any description of the remains. It is perhaps regrettable that they are quite so well known and quite so accessible; for they have suffered much at the hands of the "tourist," who has done his best to vulgarise them in his own sweet way. In one especially fine tomb we were disgusted to find a large inscription, in French, setting forth that the "Berthon expedition" (save the mark!) had "visited Palmyra and spent the spring and summer of 1895 there in examining and investigating the ruins." We noticed many traces of vandalism at different parts of the site. It would be interesting to know whether the writer of the advertisement could tell us who perpetrated them. Of course, the Arabs have done much harm to the old buildings by removing quantities of dressed stone for their own houses. But they do not describe themselves as members of an "expedition."

From different causes the wonderful ruins have suffered sadly. Not a single bust remains on the brackets of the great colonnade.—One hears curious tales, by the way, of how the last of them disappeared.—The grand archway looks as if it may collapse at any moment; many columns are overturned; and tombs and temples are falling to pieces surely and not slowly. In some places it seems impossible to account for the damage which has been

done, except by imagining a deliberate intention to destroy the works of the old artists. In the Valley of the Tombs, Mr. Haynes and I picked up some very fine pieces of carving which had evidently come from a white marble sarcophagus. They appeared to be fragments of two heads, one of a female with beautifully rendered hair, and the other of a satyr with wreathed horns. They lay at some distance from any building, and we could discover no trace of the body of the sarcophagus.

The castle struck me as being even stronger than that at Rehaba, and the elaborate system of tanks, arranged so as to collect every drop of rain-water that fell, was particularly ingenious.

The modern village is built in the enclosure of the Sun Temple. It is well kept, clean, and orderly; and its inhabitants seemed well-behaved. The mosque was superior to any we had seen elsewhere on our journey, and the *serai* (outside the enclosure) presented a respectable appearance. Shortly before our arrival, a spring which had been covered up for many years and forgotten had been rediscovered, and proved to possess a good supply of clear and sweet water. There are several other springs in the oasis, but they are all more or less brackish.

We had only two days at Palmyra; but we managed to get a very fair idea of the ruins; and the rest was sufficient to freshen up our caravan for the remainder of the journey.

The first stage took us to a *zaptieh* station, where there was a well of the most foul smelling

and tasting water I have ever met with. But as the *zaptiehs* assured us that very likely we should get none at all the next night, we arranged to take with us a couple of skins of the undelectable fluid. Soon after leaving our camping-ground the two *zaptiehs* who were escorting us fell out between themselves as to the most likely spot to obtain water at, if any at all were to be had. A camel caravan was accompanying us from Palmyra, and the Arabs in charge of it urged us to keep on a course rather more southerly than either of those proposed by the *zaptiehs*, assuring us that we should find plenty of water and some grazing for the beasts. Subsequent events proved that their counsel was good, but we did not follow it. Mr. Haynes and Mr. Duncan rode off with one of the *zaptiehs* to reconnoitre, and soon afterwards the second *zaptieh* galloped away without giving any explanation of his conduct. Our muleteers had no idea which direction to take, so we came to a halt.

While waiting for the return of the exploring party, we three Englishmen dismounted to rest our weary animals and enjoy a quiet smoke. Suddenly I saw Husan, one of our muleteers, who was holding my horse, spring into the saddle and ride off at full gallop in the direction taken by the *zaptiehs*; but knowing that he was fond of riding, and concluding that he had seized the opportunity for a gallop on the best horse in the caravan, I thought no more of the matter beyond determining to make him suffer for his impudence. He was a queer character, of extraordinarily unprepossessing

appearance; and, in addition to other peculiarities, he stuttered very badly, and was consequently a butt for the wit of his companions. Frequently he had declared that he would go no farther with a caravan of such "mad *firenghis*" as ourselves; and at Salahieh he actually went so far as to desert for a whole day, only to turn up at the camp in the evening very footsore, tired, and humble. His day's wanderings on that occasion had apparently taught him to bear his fair share of the work and take his fellows' rough jests in good part. But this time, when he did not return for an hour, we all began to wonder whether he really had left us for good, and the muleteers commenced to bewail the loss of their horse.

At last, however, we saw him returning, still riding furiously and apparently in company with one of the *zaptiehs*. Both horsemen were plainly riding without any regard for their horses, which made me extremely angry. For a few minutes they disappeared behind a dip in the land, and then Husan reappeared, alone, and coming on at a great pace. When a few hundred yards from where we were standing, he fell from the horse and seemed to be crying out to us; and we noticed that his appearance was certainly strange, although we could not quite make out what was amiss. But when, after having caught the horse, he came riding up to us, nobody could help laughing at him. He was stripped of all his clothes except his drawers, and was crying in a way that made his ugly face look absurdly like a monkey's. Jumping from the

saddle, he called aloud for our head muleteer, Khalifah, to go to him. That amazed old gentleman hastened up, bubbling over with questions and commiserations; but he was greeted with curses, and—what he cared more about—Husan's stick, which the enraged fellow flung at his head with great vigour, but fortunately with poor aim.

After this outburst of passion, Husan explained, as coherently as his feelings and the impediment in his speech would allow him to do, that he had been attacked and robbed of his clothes and my stirrups, and had been soundly beaten to boot. As proof of his statement he showed us his back, which was marked with several fresh wheals; but as he had brought his misfortunes on himself, and had moreover lost my stirrups, he received but scant sympathy in his misfortunes. The effect of his narrative upon the other muleteers was remarkable. At the mention of robbers so close at hand their fears completely overcame them, and hastening to their animals they drove them off as quickly as possible, to join the camel caravan, which had pursued its own course. Finding remonstrances and threats alike useless to restrain their panic, we followed in their wake, and shortly came upon an excellent camping-ground, with a well of water, surrounded by grass, upon which the camels and mules were already grazing.

The news of Husan's adventure threw the Arabs of the other caravan into a state of alarm equal to our muleteers'. They got out their guns and drove all their animals close up to the tents, and then

settled down into a state of nervousness, in which they constantly imagined that they saw robbers approaching. Their fears were so genuine that Husan began to take on airs, as having actually encountered the enemy and escaped with his life. Of course, we felt a little anxious about our friends; but shortly after we had pitched our tents one of the *zaptiehs* came riding up, saying that he had been looking for us and was only guided to us by the smoke from our fire. He told us that his party had discovered a good camping-ground, and wished us to take up our tents and go off to join them. Such a course being perfectly ridiculous, we naturally declined; but instead I went off with the escort to find our friends and bring them in.

How the *zaptieh* found his way in the dark was a mystery to me; but find it he did; and after two uncomfortable hours' staggering and stumbling over the rocky ground we came upon the wanderers, who were just preparing to pass the night as best they might. On our return to camp we learned that two strange Arabs had made an attempt to steal a mule, and that the muleteers had been letting off their guns in all directions for some time afterwards. However, the night passed off quietly enough, and the only person any the worse for the day's troubles was Husan, who had only an *abba*, lent him by one of the servants, to keep him from the cold.

The following day we reached Kurietain, a clean town, where a priest was very anxious that we should become his guests. We declined the

invitation, and he visited our camp instead. It seemed that he had an interest in some antiquities from Palmyra, which had found their way into the hands of a certain official at Kurietain, and hoped that we might feel disposed to speculate.

Another day's march took us to Nasriyeh, whence it would have been possible to reach Damascus in one day; but our poor animals were so done up by their long and trying journey that we decided to make two stages of it. Accordingly, we stopped over a night at Doomah, within four hours of Damascus. Of this part of the journey I need say nothing, since that ground is so well known. But the change from the desert to the road was welcome enough to all of us now; and it did our eyes good to see the orchards of olives and other trees, and the abundance of water. Indeed, the approach to the city is particularly beautiful, but since it has been described so often I need add nothing concerning it.

After the quiet scenes we had become so accustomed to, the city seemed terribly busy, but it had none of the jarring effect which Deir had exercised upon my mind, probably because of its associations. For when you realise that you are riding down the street "which is called Straight," in all probability it strikes you that the city possesses charms of its own almost equal to those of the desert.

We lost no time in finding suitable quarters for the short stay we intended making. After much haggling and importuning for *backsheesh* on their

PART OF THE CITY WALL AT SALAHIEH.

parts, the muleteers and servants were paid off. Then came a scene with Husan. Taking pity on his condition, I had lent the rascal a flannel shirt, upon the understanding that he should give it up at Damascus, where he could buy fresh clothing. My reason for stipulating for its return was that I feared to set a premium upon his carelessness or dishonesty, as the case might be, if I allowed him to keep it. In fact, I should have been paying him for losing my property. Accordingly, he was forced to give up the shirt, which he did most reluctantly, and it was promptly burned. His mortification was great; for he had been bragging to his friends of his own cleverness, as I subsequently heard; and to be set adrift in his semi-nude condition in the streets of respectable Damascus was therefore doubly unpleasant to him. Never shall I forget the picture he presented as he stood in the porch of the *khan*, stripped to his waist, stammering, stuttering, and cursing like a madman, while his friends stood by laughing, and a crowd of small boys gathered at a safe distance to jeer him, after the manner of the small boy all the world over.

XVIII

ON my second journey from Baghdad to the coast, Mr. Fisher was with me. Our caravan was a small one, consisting of eleven animals only, all told. They were all strong animals, but one of the three muleteers was a cripple.—It is a curious thing, but I have never seen, or even heard of, a caravan that was thoroughly sound in all respects.—Sturdy old Shammo was our right-hand man, and did what little cooking was required, and Nasir el-Hussein was our only other attendant. Although they were no worse than others of their class, the muleteers proved at times provoking in the extreme, and it was only by taking high-handed measures in the first place, and subsequently keeping a tight hand upon the purse-strings, that I managed to get them into order.

Of the journey to Deir I need say but little. As far as possible we avoided travelling during the heat of the day, and made all the use possible of the fine moonlight. We also contented ourselves with easy stages, being fairly independent of the *khans*, as we carried a large tent for our own use, and a smaller one for the servants. I may add, however, for the benefit of anybody who may have

occasion to make a similar journey, that the servants never used their tent, and it might just as well have been left behind. We had a clear day's rest at Anah, and another at Deir.

On leaving the latter place, as soon as we got outside the town, we were surprised to find ourselves riding over a decently made road, which appeared to be new. It certainly was a creditable piece of work for the country, as far as it went; but some five or six miles only had been completed, and then the undertaking seemed to have fallen through. Our *zaptiehs* told me it had been intended to build the road "all the way to Aleppo, but the expense was too heavy, and therefore the work was dropped for a time." But "for a time" means "for ever" in Turkey in such matters, and already we saw symptoms of decay in the work. A viaduct, stone-banked and provided with stone culverts, was tumbling to bits; and a bridge, of three arches, in stone, showed pitifully incomplete in the moonlight. It was regrettable, since the road would have proved a true blessing to the country, and its makers had a good general idea at least of the right way to go about their work. Of the first two stages little need be said. We found the valley of the river broad, but the stream itself was shrunk in consequence of the droughts, and much broken up by shoals and islets. The reaches here are short and the bends sharp. Trees are few, but there is an abundance of tamarisk and of a shrub like barbary. Below Deir we had seen comparatively few birds, but immediately above it they were

particularly numerous. Jays, *kitharis*, magpies, many varieties of finches, larks, and, of course, the ubiquitous sparrow, were all represented; crows, hawks, and vultures were numerous; and quails in enormous flocks rose before our caravan all the first day. Locusts, too, were present in their myriads, and our animals frequently trampled thousands to death at places where they covered the road like a living carpet. Taken singly they were rather pretty insects, bright yellow with pink legs, but when they swarmed over us and our belongings in the tent we failed to appreciate their beauties. At several places we came across bands of men, women, and children engaged in beating down the pests with bunches of twigs, in order to kill as many as possible; and Shammo told me that the dead locusts were swept into heaps and burned.

At T(e)ref we found the *khan* a particularly uninviting building, so pitched our tents beside a fair-sized camp of the Anazeh, who were pasturing their flocks in the neighbourhood. They are rivals of the Shammar, and are, of course, the tribe of whom Burckhardt speaks so enthusiastically. For my part, I prefer the appearance of the Shammar, for all the Anazeh I saw were small men, and their tents and dress looked mean. From Hit onwards we had seen thousands of Anazeh, and had found their camps at nearly every halting-place; and near Nahia our *zaptiehs* and their outposts had all but come to blows over a dispute about the right-of-way. I made a point of seeing as much of their

camps as possible, but never had an opportunity to visit their tents.

At Madân, the next station to T(e)ref, the *khan* lies by the foot of the bluffs, but we found it so far from the river that we rode to a camping-ground nearly two miles farther on upon the river bank. There we found the *zaptiehs* of the station in temporary quarters in huts of grass and poles, as were a few *fellahin* who were employed on the neighbouring lands. At this spot a rough storm of wind came up extremely suddenly, and for a few minutes we thought we were going to be blown into the river. In fact, a *zaptieh* and I were lifted off our feet while we were holding on to one of the tent ropes.

From Madân to Subkha, the next station, the road was level and easy, winding nearly all the way between tamarisks, where we saw many large flocks of sheep and goats, whose shepherds readily gave us milk when we asked for it. I also noticed a hare and a few franklin.

Subkha is a small village, with one shop and a new *khan*, which we found notably clean and well arranged. In the courtyard we observed an *arabanah* belonging to an official who had been to Aleppo "to buy a new wife." Shammo observed that he had paid twenty *liras* for the fair lady. "But," he added shrewdly, "he is a Government accountant, and who can better afford to spend money on such things? If he does not like her, he can afford to sell her at a loss in a year or two." The carriage was a curious thing, with a

kind of cabin in front, and a place for baggage behind. It was built on graceful lines; all curves, painted black, with floral decorations and an abundance of gilding over it, and was drawn by four strong horses. The village is picturesquely placed, at the foot of rocky bluffs and upon a bend of the river, so that it commands a view of two reaches. On the opposite bank we noticed some most fantastic-looking rocks. As soon as we were settled into the *khan*, the *mudir* came to call on us. He was a pleasant-mannered man, and spoke a little French. He told us there were sixty or seventy souls in the village (which I doubt), and discussed the likelihood of the Baghdad railway being completed, regretting that the British were not going to construct it.

Shortly after leaving Subkha, I noticed some ruins on top of the bluffs upon our left. We had not time to examine them, but they seemed in the dim light to be either the walls of a large fort or a small town, built of stone, square on plan, and with buttresses along the exterior. The *zaptieh* could give me no information concerning them, and had never heard them spoken of by any name except "the ancient ruins." In an hour we got into the tamarisk jungle again. In many parts the bushes grew to a height level with, and even above, our heads, and intermingled with them were numbers of caper shrubs. I also noticed some wild raspberry canes in flower, and numbers of white anemones. Besides these, there was the sweet-smelling (*h*)*'elga*, with a leaf like a small ash,

and a scent like sweet-briar. This pleasant part of the wood took us two hours to traverse. Then we struck the river again, and afterwards rode over a cultivated plain, until we came in sight of the ruins of Rakka upon the opposite bank. That we were unable to visit them was a disappointment to me, for travellers who have done so report that they are extremely interesting. All we could see were the remains of a large wall and two or three tall minarets. We rode on for an hour and a half to a camping-ground in a sandy wady beside a summer village of the *fellahin*.

On the next stage, in the early morning, we saw a gazelle within a hundred yards of us. It stood staring in a surprised way at first, but as soon as our *zaptieh* attempted to approach it for a shot, it frisked off. Soon afterwards, we saw half-a-dozen more of the graceful creatures playing on a sandy flat by the river. When we got near, one of them went over to a bush and roused up her young ones which were sleeping there, and then the whole band scampered off through the tamarisks, and away into the valleys among the foot-hills. Shortly afterwards, we came across two more, quite close, one fawn, and one grey. All of them struck me as being particularly lacking in shyness, for even when they did run away, they stopped now and again to have a look at us.

Before reaching el-Hammam, where we intended to halt, we came upon the ruins of Surah, and rode out of our way to examine them. The town appears to have been built upon the bank

of a canal, but in our hurried ride over its mounds we could get only a very slight idea of the place. I noticed a few blocks of dressed stone lying about, but as far as I could judge, nearly all the buildings had been of brick, and bricks and tiles were plentiful. The bricks were from a shallow mould, with a kind of finger-marking in some cases, and they were of good quality, and laid in excellent mortar. We fancied we could make out the foundations of a citadel, but even that is doubtful. The mounds now stand at some little distance from the river, which at this part is gradually wearing its way eastwards. At el-Hammam we found a large body of Anazeh Arabs encamped. There is no village near the *khan*, which appears a desperately lonely spot; yet a *mudir* lives there with his harem. What on earth the poor man can find to do is a marvel.

The following description of the last stages of our journey is taken direct from the diary which I kept at the time :—

"*June* 29.—Broke camp, and got on the move at one o'clock. For the first three or four miles the road lay on the edge of the cliff, and was in a very bad state. The animals displayed a predilection for keeping on the extreme edge, especially at places where it was in a dangerously crumbling condition. I suggested to Shammo that his *kadeesh* wanted to commit suicide over the cliff. 'Yes, *sahib*, he tired of carrying heavy man like me: he rather be dead.' In the starlight the drop

COURTYARD OF A EUPHRATES KHAN.

looked a terrific one, and the way the waters churned round the fallen boulders showed what a small chance of escape one would have if one should slip. We felt more comfortable when we turned into the tamarisks again. At the edge of the copse we passed a big Anazeh camp, with large numbers of sheep and goats lying round the tents. The camp dogs clamoured as usual, but nobody stirred in the camp.

"After a lot of up-and-down work, we came upon a most picturesque bit of the road, at the foot of the cliffs, and just above the loops of the river. Here we met a large caravan, five days out from Aleppo, some two hundred mules, a few *kadeeshes* and donkeys, and about thirty merchants. At half-past five we sighted a tall building upon the left bank of the river, and about an hour afterwards were abreast of it. It turned out to be Kalat Japp'r (or Daf'r), and from what I could see of the ruins, they appear to be the remains of a mosque, minaret, and some fortifications of early Arabic days. Upon our side of the river I saw two or three towers peeping up above the brow of the bluffs, and set out on foot to investigate them, followed by Fisher. The *zaptieh* said that the ruins were those of 'old Abu Herreire,' but Dr. Peters says they are 'the ruins of Siffin, or Sikkin of the Arabs, Sephe of the Romans.' My attention was caught by a cave at the foot of the rise, but we did not stop to examine it, as the ruins above seemed more worthy of attention. The climb up the hill was hot work, for the slope

was steep, and our slippery boots and stiff gaiters did not help matters much. When I reached the top, I found I was on an isolated mound which was separated from a spur of the bluff by the dry bed of a stream.

"On the hill upon which I stood were the remains of three towers. South-westerly was one of burnt brick, very finely built. Its walls are standing for a height of about twenty feet, or more in parts, and I should say it is nearly twenty feet square on plan. In that wall which faces towards the river are two windows and a door; in the opposite one is a single opening, which was in all probability a door; and in both the other walls are two windows. All these openings are arched with semicircular arches outside, and segmental ones inside. At the angles of the building, where the dome was turned off, the timbers (poles) still remain, and the internal plastering is but slightly damaged. Externally, the tower is decorated with three diamond-shaped panels near the top of each face. The roof, of course, has fallen in. Going northwards, I next came across the walls of a square building, faced with rubble-work, but only a few feet of their height remain—just enough to show that the entrance to the place faced towards the river. Then there are the ruins of a similar building, well built with rubbled walls in mud mortar, and with its roofing timbers intact, as in the first tower. All these buildings are upon the isolated hill, which is separated from the river by a belt of tamarisk jungle somewhat over a hundred yards wide. The

spur of the bluffs opposite the hill is lower, and upon it stands a rubble-walled mosque, with a minaret built with fine quality bricks. Placed high up in the walls of this minaret are some circular-headed windows with ornamental pillars to them, and for ventilation there are ornamental air-holes. It is circular in form, but rises from a square base, which is now much undercut, and seems likely to collapse very shortly. Around the ruins there is an Arab graveyard, its graves piled with bricks and stones from the old buildings.

"The village of Abu Herreire is little more than half an hour's ride beyond the ruins, and we reached it at nine o'clock. The *khan* is a decidedly dirty place, but we found that Shammo had swept out one of its rooms and had put up our beds in it, so we made the best of it. The roof of this room is formed of plaited tamarisk boughs, laid on tamarisk poles, and supported by a large log of mulberry. All over this district tamarisk is used for roofing and for hurdles, and palm logs and mats are not to be seen.

"Soon after our arrival, I heard Abbas calling out that one of the horses was dying, and there was a lot of running to and fro before the *khan* and excited shouting. It seems that poor old Hajji, the white pack-horse, had fallen into the river, and that the boy immediately concluded that he would be drowned. As the stream is shallow, and the current not very rapid, there was no real cause for alarm, but all the village turned out to the rescue, and eight fellows went in after the noble

beast. Eventually he was dragged ashore, when he insisted upon stopping for a drink, and he now looks all the better for his bath. There was a most amusing scene between the indignant villagers and the muleteers, when Hamadi declared that he could not give *backsheesh* to the rescue party, adding in a loud tone (for our benefit) that he had not 'even money for barley, by Allah.'

"Our *zaptieh* to-day was from the Persian border, and rather an uncommon fellow in his appearance and dress. He was of a very light complexion, with a brown beard and moustache; under his regulation blue coat he wore a black frock-coat with pleated skirts; and his cap was of blue cloth covered with astrakhan. He rode a beautiful mare, with a year-old foal at side, of whom he took the utmost care. For her forelegs he had a pair of plated shackles, and for her and the foal he carried remarkably neat and clean nose-bags, made of goat's hair and covered with amulets. Such cleanliness throughout as he and his belongings exhibited, I do not remember seeing in any other *zaptieh*. His saddle was of a type entirely new to me—like two pairs of nozzleless bellows, with wooden pommels—made of fine grained black leather; and his stirrups had almost circular treads, solid and deep. I tried to talk to him, but he knew very little Arabic, and neither Shammo nor Nasir could make out much of what he said.

"*June* 30.—Left Abu Herreire a few minutes after three, escorted by a *zaptieh* who had been stationed at that dismal place over four years. He

told me his home was at Suchne, and when I told him that I had been there, he talked of the place in a very homesick manner.

"At first the valley was broad, the foot-hills lying back quite a mile from the river; and the going was good and easy. Soon after we left it became quite light, although the sun did not rise until a quarter to four.

"At five minutes past six we passed the ruins of a tower, or castle, upon our left, which, I presume, represent Dibse. At a quarter to seven we came to a spot where the bluffs, closing in sharply upon the river, run beside it for some distance, and there the scenery was simply magnificent. The opposite bank of the river is flat, but on this side the cliffs are particularly wild and rugged, seamed and scarred with deep fissures and faults innumerable. The rock is mostly white limestone, and where the sunlight falls upon it is dazzling as snow, but in some parts it is covered with soft brown lichen, and in others it shows streaks of red and yellow sandstone. The caravan track winds along the foot of the cliffs upon a shelving bank of débris, and between it and the river the slope is covered with a greenery of tamarisk, caper, and brambles. The river flashes by towards the Gulf, silvery brown, its surface broken in some parts by flat banks of red shingle or mud; and here and there a great boulder, which has rolled from the cliff, raises a churn of white foam. Sometimes the cliffs shrink back for a space from the river. Elsewhere, they almost elbow you into the water, and you must ride

cautiously and see that your animal does not go too close to the crumbling edge of the pathway. Overhead, against the edge of the cliffs, the sky forms a background of the most intense blue, against which the hawks poise, circle, and swoop. Heavy vultures flap lazily by, looking dead black when high up, but showing the yellow bars in their wings and their cruel yellow beaks quite clearly sometimes when they fly lower down. One sails by with some dead thing in its claws, at which it pecks as it flies, and another is being chased by three bright-coloured, audacious jays, who keep up a perpetual chatter and make sudden dashes at him at frequent intervals. Sometimes an eagle sweeps down, fluttering the less powerful birds to wild alarm as he sails along the face of the cliff. Now and then rock-pigeons fly swiftly from point to point of the rocks, and dip hurriedly into their nests in the crevices, as if in fear of the soaring hawks. Indeed, for all its beauty of form and colour, the place must be a poor one for the smaller birds to live in, I fancy.

"When we cleared this pass we rode over another fine stretch of open land, which looked as if it might be made highly productive by a little attention to irrigation, all the way to Meskene. At a quarter-past seven, and again at 8.20 we passed ruins on our left. The former, Sheikh Hasan, seemed from the distance to bear a strong likeness to those we visited yesterday. The tower has a segmental arched doorway, with a pointed arched window upon either side of it, and a small

square one above it; and there are traces of an octagonal tower and a dome showing above the lower structure. The Arabs call the other ruins which we saw Old Meskene. I noticed one large tower, two-storeyed, a plain octagonal minaret and a few fragments of walling.

"At half-past ten we reached the *khan* at Meskene, the last upon the Euphrates at which we shall stop. It will be a wrench to say "good-bye" to the river, which seems quite an old friend now. So long as we have been in sight of it, even at its most deserted reaches, we have never felt altogether out of the world.

"The *khan* is a new building, and a great advance on most on this road,—for instance, the roof of this room is planked and painted, — and the servants keep the whole place clean. The *khanchi* is a Levantine, and affects European costume. Shammo says there is a telegraph station here, but we have not seen any wires. Hard by are *zaptieh* barracks and a *mudir's* residence, and a little way off is a group of tents. The *mudir*, an insignificant person with a vivid red beard, called on us as soon as we arrived, but we were tired, and he soon left us.

"*July* 1.—Shammo roused us, all too soon, at a quarter-past one. His passion for early rising is rather a nuisance. He said he had been awake over three hours, keeping an eye on a soldier who was prowling about round the baggage. Forty minutes later the loads were on and we were under way. For a little over an hour we still kept by the river; then we climbed a steep bit and set off

over the plateau. It was a new country altogether, covered with a parched-looking grass and cultivated in patches. Large flocks and herds were grazing in every direction. At six o'clock we passed a ruined stone building standing on a *tel*. I took it for a *khan*, but the *zaptieh* said it was "a *kalat* and *zaptieh* station of old," called Mihdoom. Next a few farm buildings began to dot the prospect, and one or two cone villages caught our attention. From a distance they look like a collection of big bee skeps, but on closer inspection they appear more like a cluster of kilns.

"Soon after nine we reached our camping-ground, at Deir Hafr, a rather favourable specimen of a cone village. Its strangely-shaped houses are neatly built and seem fairly weather-tight. It boasts three or four shops — all cloth merchants' apparently; and we have been able to buy plenty of eggs, chicken, and vegetables; but the only fuel procurable is in the form of dried cakes of dung. To the north-west of the village flows a small stream, by which we have pitched our camp. Near by stands a large white house, presumably some official residence, which has a respectable garden round it. Outside the village are many stacks of corn and straw. The place appears to be prosperous, but "all the land between here and Aleppo" belongs to Zekki Pasha, so we learn from the *zaptieh*.

"The muleteers are begging hard for "curry, curry," and they have actually eaten a tin of herrings, at which they previously turned up their noses. I suppose this condescension is intended

THE VILLAGE OF DEIR HAFR, SYRIA.

to restore them to our good books, with an eye to *backsheesh* at the journey's end. Certainly they are on their best behaviour.

"*July* 2. — After my last entry, it is amusing to have to chronicle the obstinacy and idiocy of the muleteers last night.

"We had the tents taken down and set to work packing before sunset, hoping to get to Aleppo early. But Husan, Hamadi, and Abbas were all inclined to take things easy, and we had to make a start before them, with the *zaptieh*, leaving Shammo and Nasir to hurry them along. They were not long in overtaking us, as we loitered by the way for them to come up. The road was stony and the young moon did not give much light, but we made fair progress, steering our course by her, until she set. Just then we were skirting a *tel*, and here the *zaptieh* and Husan had a quarrel about the direction we ought to follow. Everybody became angry; no attention was paid to my orders to stop the caravan until the *zaptieh* should find the road; the animals wandered about in every direction; and the result was that we got hopelessly muddled at once. Then followed a bad time of futile wandering along field paths and over furrowed land, of tacking in every direction, and of general bewilderment and bad temper. At last we stumbled across a small water-mill, where we called a halt and roused up two or three fellows who were asleep inside. At first they all declared that they could not find the road in the dark; one of them sarcastically suggested that the *zaptieh* should ride back

to his station and ask directions; but finally one was persuaded to go with us as guide. Doubting the fellow's ability, I called Husan to me and said that unless he was quite convinced of the stranger's power to put us on the track we would stay where we were for the night. He swore that we should soon be on the road, which was "*adl*," etc. etc., and we set off again. But very soon it became apparent that our guide was a blind leader of the blind; for we went blundering over cornfields, where the corn was piled up ready for thrashing, meandering along the banks of a streamlet, and at last came to a ford, where our guide admitted his failure, and our patience gave out. I insisted upon the animals being brought together and a halt being made until daylight. As a matter of fact, we were nearly on the road, but the experience of the past few hours was not such as to encourage us to go farther. Husan was very anxious to stop upon the opposite side of the ford, where a waggon from Deir, which we had seen at Meskene, had halted; and as he became impertinent and actually drove the animals through the water in defiance of my orders, I was reduced to taking strong measures with him. He became extremely meek thereupon, brought the beasts back, got off the loads, and unrolled our rugs. We slept from half-past twelve till four.

"Soon after our fresh start we hit upon the right road, where it was all easy going. Very many cone villages were scattered all over the plain, which was enclosed by low hills, and we met numerous travellers. A little before nine we sighted the

citadel and gardens of Aleppo, and soon afterwards reached Jabrin, whence we two rode ahead with Shammo and the *zaptieh* to look out for quarters, leaving Nasir to see to the baggage.

"The approach to the city was extremely picturesque, and the land was in a state of cultivation which struck us as very high after our experience of the neglected southern country. Gardens and orchards were on all sides of us, and numerous coffee-shops and summer-houses standing by the roadside told their own tale of a large city. The distant hills were covered with vines, and the soil in most of the turned-up fields was of a peculiarly rich red colour. The town itself, dominated by its picturesque citadel, looked a fine place with its stone houses and smart barracks.

"For some reason of his own, the *zaptieh* led us all round the outskirts of the city, through acres of cemeteries, and close to the barracks and the Christian quarter; so that though we reached the suburbs of the place at half-past ten, it was nearly an hour later before we fetched up at the Hotel Chahbah, a Turkish *lokanda*, where we are now quartered in clean and airy rooms."

After a week at Aleppo we travelled to Alexandretta by carriage. Our baggage, in charge of Nasir, was sent by a covered cart. It travelled much more slowly than we did, but, whereas we made several long halts, it kept on the move nearly all the time, and we reached Alexandretta only an hour ahead of it. The road was an excellent one,

and as our carriage was roomy and comfortable the long drive proved thoroughly enjoyable. We left Aleppo in the evening of the 9th, and reached Alexandretta at noon of the 11th. The *khans* were superior to most of those in the south, and nearly all the time we were driving through cultivated land. The people we saw were very different from the Arabs to whom we were accustomed; even the camel drivers and muleteers wore baggy pantaloons, short jackets, and turban-wound fezzes, instead of *ziboons* and *kefiyehs*; and many of the women were unveiled and wore trousers. Nobody seemed to understand Arabic, and as we knew no Turkish we were reduced to pantomime to express our wants. A thing that struck us as remarkable was that three of our *zaptiehs* went off without asking for *backsheesh*. None of their fellows in the Baghdad district would ever dream of such conduct. But then Aleppo was governed by Rayif Pasha, of whom we had heard nothing but good on all hands during our stay in the city; and all the *zaptiehs* under him received their pay regularly, which their brethren of Baghdad do not. Most unfortunately for the Aleppo vilayet, at the time we were there, it was known that the popular governor, disgusted at the intrigues of the military party in the city, had tendered his resignation, and that it had been accepted; and when we arrived at Alexandretta we found the place prepared to receive the new *wali*, Enis Pasha, of Diarbekir notoriety. No wonder that the Christians in Aleppo were shaking in their shoes.

We were surprised by the numbers of large caravans that we met bringing up Batoum oil from the coast for Aleppo and Deir. In one caravan I counted over three hundred camels, each of them carrying six cases of oil, and we must have passed quite a dozen nearly as large as this one. Many of the camels shied at the sight of our carriage, and several times we expected to see some of them go toppling over the edge of the road to crash down on the rocky ledges beneath; but though their drivers always made a great fuss with our coachman on such occasions, no accident occurred. The scenery was magnificent at most parts, and we were struck by the abundance of water after seeing so little farther south on the road. Much of the time we were climbing up the steep hills on zigzagging roads that looked too difficult to be overcome, and once or twice we found ourselves cut off from the world beneath us by wreathing clouds. Sometimes we drove across level stretches from which it seemed that there was no way out across the hills that ringed us in; but beyond the wonderful pass of Beylan we descended steadily, and at last found ourselves looking across the picturesque harbour and bay. After some trouble in getting a steamer, on account of quarantine regulations, we finally bade good-bye to Turkey, and on 5th August I found myself back in England once more.

XIX

AT the time when I first had the wish to see something of scientific excavating, recent discoveries in the Nile Valley had served to eclipse the claims to notice of the Euphrates and Tigris sites. I therefore never gave a thought to the possibilities of Turkey, or of Persia, my mind turning naturally towards Egypt as my land of promise; and I was not a little disappointed when fate led me to Baghdad instead of to Cairo. To be quite candid, I had a hazy idea that Baghdad was in Persia, while of Nippur I had never so much as heard the name before Professor Petrie mentioned it to me. But now, although affection for my first love is still strong within me,—stronger than ever, indeed, after my experience of the rainless valley itself,—I am heartily glad to have made acquaintance with the less popular but none the less fascinating land between the two rivers.

That England at present pays such scant attention to the work of excavation in Babylonia and Assyria appears highly strange and not a little regrettable. France, Germany, America, and even Turkey, have all been doing good work lately in this region; while we have been sitting idly by and

neglecting to follow up the successes of the brilliant little band of excavators who laid such a noble foundation for us to build upon. At the present moment, Dr. King is at work at Nineveh, on behalf of the British Museum; and he is certain to do as much as is possible with the funds at his disposal; but what interest does the public at home show in the work? And how does it compare with the ambitious undertakings of other nations? Of the French and German expeditions it may be said that they are supported by Government grants. But what of the American? The Niffer expedition has already cost over £20,000, the whole of which has been subscribed by the public. What have we spent in this cause—the advancement of knowledge of these interesting regions?

Surely it is but little to our credit that things should be in their present state? Has not the nation sufficient pride and sufficient money to support at least one expedition in Babylonia? How long will she be content to lag in the rear, instead of occupying her old place—the van?

It is idle to endeavour to excuse our inertness by saying that it pays us better to buy antiquities in the open market than to excavate at any particular site for ourselves. Unless we wish to take rank with antiquity mongers and twopenny showmen of curiosities, we must remember that there are other ends to aim at than the mere accumulation of specimens for exhibition in museums. A specimen without a "pedigree" naturally is not nearly so valuable as one whose

history is known; and it is hardly necessary to say that the accounts of such particulars given by dealers are absolutely worthless. A proper determination of many antiquities can be arrived at only by careful observation of the surroundings in which they are discovered. The real purpose of many of the articles we found at Niffer, for instance, would never have been ascertained unless we had made use of the clues afforded by the position in which they were dug up. Especially important is it to note the level at which each article is unearthed, and to observe its bearings in connection with fixed points that may serve to determine its age; and this can be done only by carefully supervising the work of digging. Moreover, quite apart from these considerations, it is evident that by digging it is often possible to secure choice specimens for which a fancy price would be demanded by any dealer. For antiquity dealers nowadays are far too clever to part with such specimens below their best market value; and if you wish to get anything from them, you must reckon on being in competition with other purchasers; while of anything that you find in your own excavations there can be no question as to possession. Again, the quantity of articles of minor importance which are secured in the course of systematic excavations usually make spade work actually pay better than the purchasing system, not only in point of quality, but also of quantity. As to the buildings, canal systems, methods of burial, and similar subjects of the highest importance to the knowledge of a site, they can, of course, be

AN ANTIQUITY DEALER OF BAGHDAD: ALI KURDI.

studied only on the field, as each basketful of earth is removed—as the expeditions of other nations are studying them. And the gathering of information on these points is at least as important as the collection of tablets and other objects for exhibition.

Another point worthy of consideration is that in purchasing from dealers we do a positive wrong by encouraging that haphazard Arab grubbing which has been a source of damage to so many sites. If we can do no good, we might at the least endeavour to do no harm to the interesting *tels*, which, having so faithfully guarded the secrets deposited with them for centuries, certainly deserve careful and reverent handling from us inquisitive moderns. When, in the interests of science, we wish to open up these graves of the dead cities and temples, let us see to it that the disinterment is conducted in a seemly manner, and not left to those whose aims are entirely sordid. So much is due to them, surely—and to our own good name.

The antiquities of Egypt are jealously guarded by a watchful governmental department. The corresponding Turkish department does what it can, and I believe it is one of the best administered of the country; but Turkey has little money to spare for such matters as the preservation of ruins; and the mounds are consequently largely at the mercy of any ignorant and clumsy *fellah* who cares to seek for "treasure" on his own account. As an illustration of the harm that the untrained and uncontrolled grubber may do, I would refer the reader to the incident of the breaking of a bronze bowl at

Abu Hatab which I have mentioned in a previous chapter. Many other examples could be given, but this one will suffice. Under the circumstances, the best thing European nations can do is to see to it that the most important sites are properly and scientifically excavated before further harm befalls them. Egypt and other more fortunate countries can wait a little while now: the unexplored mounds of Babylonia and Assyria call for immediate attention.

It would be too much to hope that the Tigris and Euphrates ruins can become as happy a hunting-ground for English excavators as are those of the Nile. In Egypt we are recognised as the benefactors of the country, and are welcome visitors; all the necessities and too many of the luxuries of European civilisation can be found in Cairo and other haunts of the tourist; the winter visitor finds the climate well-nigh perfect; the country is easily and quickly reached; and fast trains and comfortable steamers make travelling in it easy and enjoyable. In the Turkish land, on the contrary, we are frequently reminded that we are on a foreign soil, and sometimes made to feel that we are not altogether welcome; luxuries and some so-called necessities we must do without; the climate, though far better than our own, is not to be compared with that of Egypt; and travelling is neither comfortable nor easy. And that the antiquities of the Nile are of a kind to appeal more readily to the average person than are those of Assyria and Babylonia there is no gainsaying.

I have no desire to compare the two countries and their antiquities, however; all that I wish to do is to point out that whereas Egypt enjoys a high degree of popularity, her poor sister is treated with an indifference which I find it hard to understand. For Mesopotamia and Chaldæa most assuredly have strong claims to consideration greater than they receive, in their intimate associations with the history of the Old Testament. Ur, Nineveh, and Babylon are names familiar to all of us from our childhood; and that they and other sites hold secrets that well repay the trouble of excavating them has been proved over and over again. The point is simply this—Are we to leave the work entirely to other nations, or are we to bear our share of the labour and reap a corresponding share of the fame and credit? Is it fair to allow them to bear the brunt of the battle? Assuredly, it is not to our honour so to do. Surely we can find somebody worthy to raise the drooping banner that was formerly borne aloft by Rich, Rawlinson, Layard, and others of our countrymen.

It may be urged that the German and French excavations have been strongly backed by their respective Governments. But what of the Americans? They are no better off in this respect than we, yet they have done wonders at Niffer, and may well congratulate themselves on the results of their enterprise and pluck; and a united effort on the part of those interested in the subject in England could hardly fail to produce equally satisfactory results. The only important thing is to

rouse ourselves sufficiently to make the effort. The opening sentences of Dr. Peters' book (*Nippur*) run thus: "England and France have done a noble work of exploration in Assyria and Babylonia. It is time for America to do her part. Let us send out an American expedition." With very little alteration the appeal would be suitable to make to an English audience at the present moment. The pity is that such an appeal should have become necessary; that we should have rested so long from the "noble work," and left Germany and France to write their names where ours formerly stood. There is room and to spare for all of us; and France and Germany would be only too happy to have us as friendly rivals in the work; for the field is large and the workers few; and every expedition by its labours lightens those of other excavators. We have rested long enough: it is time to bestir ourselves to action once again.

It is undoubtedly a pity that we have no Society to do in Assyria and Babylonia what the Egypt Exploration Fund is doing in Egypt. Such an association would be invaluable, even if it only excavated a single site scientifically; while if it served to draw public attention in England to the affairs of Asiatic Turkey at large, it would be performing a work of far-reaching benefit. For it is quite certain that every penny spent on excavations in the country is a penny towards helping on our interests there generally; and it is equally sure that those interests are considerably greater than the average person realises. In this connection it

may be observed that the German excavators at Hillah are an outpost for their nation, so to speak, serving to prepare the way for that advance of their countrymen which is sure to follow upon the construction of the Baghdad railway. This fact may even account for much of the support they receive in Berlin. Already the people of Hillah and its district are saying that it is the Germans who will bring prosperity to their country; and our own prestige naturally grows dimmer as the German grows brighter. It would be ridiculous to blame the Germans for looking after their own interests in their own way; and they apparently are entirely frank in their dealings with us; but it is nevertheless humiliating to see them undertaking a work which by all tradition we should have done ourselves. Formerly Britain was proud to be the means of introducing improvements into the historical but sadly neglected land; but latterly we have been resting on our oars and allowing others to work themselves into the position we used to hold. This should give us food for serious reflection; for to anybody who has looked at the matter in even the most superficial way, it must be apparent that, whatever may be the case in the north, in the south of the country our interests are incomparably greater than those of Germany or any other European nation. These interests were built up by the enterprise and honest dealings of our countrymen, who laboured for the good of Turkey quite as much as for our own advancement; and it behoves us to see that our good name and position are not

allowed to become tarnished. We still deal honestly: it may be that we are not as enterprising as formerly. That we have now far greater interests in other parts of the world is, of course, beyond question; but very little attention would suffice to hold our ground, and private enterprise could do much in that way still, as it has done in the past. We have been strangely apathetic on the subject; but recently, thanks largely to Lord Curzon having directed attention to the state of affairs, we have shown signs of rousing ourselves; and it seems now as if our statesmen have every intention of looking after our interests.

I have no space, and this is not the place, to endeavour to show how we have built up our position; but anyone who is interested in the subject will find it an easy matter to post himself up in it. I would commend to his attention two recently published books, *The Middle Eastern Question*,[1] by Valentine Chirol; and *The Persian Problem*,[2] by Whigham. After reading these two volumes and others to which they will lead him to refer, he will probably come to the conclusion that, although we have bungled badly in the past, there is still time for us to act effectively if only we make up our minds resolutely that we will act instead of sitting down to cry over spilt milk. He will realise, too, that the question of the railway is a highly important one for ourselves as well as for Turkey; and, I fancy, he will see very clearly that whoever constructs the line from the north to Baghdad, we ought to

[1] Published by John Murray. [2] Published by Isbister & Co.

insist, at all costs, that south of that point its construction and control be left entirely in our hands. Having borne the brunt of the work of opening up trade and communications, surely England is not prepared to see any other nation step in and deprive her of the fruits of her labours?

The greatest mistake that is commonly made in considering the question of the railway is to fancy that it affects us only in so far as it offers an alternative route from the Suez Canal for our Indian possessions, and that it could never pay on its own merits. No doubt it would be a year or two before it paid satisfactory dividends, since the country would develop its resources but slowly; but if the line were constructed on the route originally proposed by ourselves (*i.e.* by the Euphrates Valley), there would be every prospect of its paying its own way honestly in a very short time. Whether the German line will ever do that, remains to be seen. Its projectors appear to have thought only of their own interests, and to have utterly ignored poor Turkey, which must pay the piper by means of a heavy kilometric guarantee. It would be an interesting experiment if both schemes, British and German, were carried out. That, of course, would mean competition; but it would be a competition from which we need not shrink; and it would be a splendid thing for the country. In such a case, our line would most naturally connect with the existing one from Beyrout to Damascus; and doubtless the French would gladly co-operate with us in making it successful. But below Baghdad,

it cannot be said too often or too emphatically, we should certainly control all communications.

For, after all, the interests of that part of the country are, and always will be, largely bound up with those of Persia and the Persian Gulf, in which direction our responsible statesmen have happily given it to be clearly understood, we will tolerate no interference from any other power. Our rights there have been acquired by sheer merit, and any other power but Great Britain would long ago have recompensed herself for what she had done, by seizing one or more of the Gulf ports and establishing a strong naval base in those waters. We have policed the Gulf for a century, and it is to the presence of our gunboats in its waters that the suppression of slavery and piracy is due. Moreover, we have done a particularly good work in putting an end to all fighting at sea between the coast tribes; although we have actually gained nothing for ourselves by so doing, except the satisfaction of knowing that we have done well. Practically all the shipping of the Gulf is under our flag, though we have never sought to impose any restrictions on other nations getting as much of it as they can. In fact, our conduct throughout has been self-denying to an extraordinary degree; and yet all that we ask is that other nations should honourably regard the existing condition of things and refrain from seeking a foothold in this region, as we ourselves have refrained. Considering the vast interest we have at stake in India, and taking into account the undeniable fact that Russia is in-

BUNDIR ABBAS, PERSIAN GULF.

trigùing against us in Persia with a purpose to which it would be futile to attempt to close our eyes, it seems incomprehensible that we should shilly-shally over this Persian Problem as we have been doing. Opposed to our own apathy and seeming indifference, we have Russia's never-relaxing watchfulness and push, as anybody who has been in that region is sure to have noticed for himself. Russia has done so much better for herself than we have for ourselves, not only because she does not scruple to make use of means which we should never dream of employing, but also because she knows exactly what she wants, and constantly strains every nerve to reach it. That is the advantage of her affairs being in the hands of a few able men who are not constantly hampered by the interference of busybodies who shriek hysterically whenever attention is diverted momentarily from the parish pump! Until the British make it understood that they are sufficiently interested in the question to support strong action by their own Government, there will always be a possibility of the wily Russian trying some sudden *coup* in the Gulf in the same way that he has tried similar moves in the Far East. In that case our lack of a policy concerning the Persian Problem is like to cost us dear indeed!

I make no pretence of being in any way an authority on the question of the Near East. But as an Englishman who has been some time in the region, and heard the subject discussed by those on the spot, and in a position to speak with authority,

I do wish to rouse the interest of my own people in the subject. For as a nation we appear to be culpably indifferent to the whole question. Full as our hands are with other affairs, surely we can spare a little energy to keep up our prestige in this quarter of the world. An intelligent Baghdadi, who had travelled all over the country, and over much of Persia too, once said to a friend of mine: "At one time the British were as lions, but now they seem to give way always—to Russia, to France, to Germany. I cannot understand it. Why is it so?" A straw is sufficient to show the drift of the current; and although I could give very many instances to show how our indifference is injuring us in the sight of natives, as well as that of our own people on the spot, I might only weary my reader by so doing. I will therefore content myself by asking him if he can find any satisfactory reply to that query, "Why is it so?" Why, indeed!

GLOSSARY

NOTE.—In this glossary I have attempted only to give the meaning of the few words—mostly Turkish and Arabic—in the sense in which I have used them, so that the reader will be able to follow the book easily. In the Baghdad district many Persian words are used, which I have been unable to find in any Arabic dictionary—*e.g.* "imam," as used for the tomb of a saint. The word in Arabic means literally a "leader" (of prayers); and I think that it must be used in the sense I give it as an abbreviation of *imamzadeh*, which is a Persian word signifying "shrine." I need only add that I give the words as I heard them used, and I have endeavoured to write them in such a way that the reader will find their pronunciation easy. T.=Turkish, E.=Egyptian Arabic.

Abba . . . . Arab cloak.
Adl . . . . . Straight.
Agal . . . . A fillet of rope, used to keep the *kefiyeh* in position.
Antica . . . . An antiquity.
Arabanah . . . A cart (see p. 126).
Arak . . . . A coarse spirit, made from dates, etc.
Arakcheen . . Caps worn beneath the *kefiyehs*.
Askar . . . . A soldier; a private (T.).
Bahr . . . . A sea. Used also for any stretch of water, as in Bahr Yusuf="Joseph's canal."
Beg . . . . . A title of respect="Lord."
Bellum . . . . A rowing-boat (see p. 85).
Bint . . . . . A girl; daughter. Bint el-Amir = "Sultan's Daughter."
Buggalow . . A large sea-going sailing-boat (see p. 86).
Chaoush . . . A sergeant. Frequently used for a corporal, much as we sometimes address a policeman as "sergeant."

Chelabieh . . . A very small skiff (see p. 211).
Churd . . . . An apparatus for raising water for irrigation purposes; other forms being the *naoura* and the *shadoof* (E.).
Dahabiyeh. . . A Nile house-boat (E.)
Dalal . . . . A broker.
Dann(a)g . . . A small boat (see p. 211).
Dimbuk . . . A native drum.
Effendi. . . . A gentleman.
Farnoose . . . A lantern.
Farnoosji . . . A lantern-bearer.
Fellah . . . . A peasant; a countryman (pl. *fellahin*).
Fez . . . . . The Turkish cap.
Finjan. . . . A coffee-cup.
Firenghi . . . A European (lit. "a Frank").
Gafir . . . . A guard (E.).
Gebel . . . . A hill; a mountain. In Egypt commonly applied to the pebbly desert.
Gherafa . . . A paddle (see p. 211).
Giaour. . . . A Christian (lit. "infidel") (T.)
Goupha . . . . A coracle.
Gouphagi . . . A boatman, *i.e.* one who works a *goupha*.
Hakim. . . . A doctor of medicine; a sage.
Hamal. . . . A street porter.
Harameer. . . Robbers (sing. *harami*).
Harem. . . . Women's quarters (lit. "forbidden").
Hawagur. . . Gentleman; foreigner.
Helvar. . . . A sweetmeat.
Hoseh . . . . A war-dance; a chorus (see p. 197).
Ibn . . . . . A son.
Imam . . . . A shrine (lit. "a leader." See note on previous page).
Iwan . . . . A porch or portico.
Izzar . . . . A cloak worn by Arab ladies.
Jann . . . . Pl. of *jinnee*.
Jinnee . . . . A supernatural being, familiar to readers of the *Arabian Nights* under the title "genie."
Kadeesh . . . An inferior horse. Equivalent to our expression "crock."
Kalat . . . . A fortress; a castle (T.).
Kaimakam . . A lieutenant-colonel; a deputy-governor.
Kebob . . . . Pieces of roast-meat on skewers.
Kefiyeh. . . . The Arab head-dress.

Khan . . . . An inn.
Khanchi . . . An inn-keeper.
Kishik . . . . A small fort.
Lira . . . . A Turkish gold coin, about 19s. 2d.
Magwarr . . . A club or mace, usually a short stick with a head of stone or bitumen.
Mahmil . . . A litter.
Martli . . . . A rifle. A corruption of "Martini."
Meftool . . . A fort; a mud castle.
Mehala . . . Sea-going sailing vessel (see p. 86).
Mejideh . . . A Turkish coin, worth about 4s.
Meshoof . . . A small boat (see p. 211).
Mudir . . . . A kind of magistrate, or governor of a small place.
Muezzin . . . The official who gives the call to prayers.
Mullah . . . A priest.
Munkari . . . A muleteer (*mukari*).
Murdi . . . . A punting pole (see p. 211).
Mutbuk . . . A kitchen (*matbakh*).
Mutesarrif . . Governor of a *sanjak*, or province.
Muthif . . . . A guest-house.
Naharak said . "May your day be happy"="Good-morning."
Nokador . . . Captain of a boat.
Para . . . . A coin of very small value.
Piastre . . . . A coin, value 2½d.
Sarraf . . . . A banker; a money-changer.
Sarq . . . . Good, or true (of money, a piastre *sarq*=a tariff piastre).
Sefinah . . . . A freight boat.
Serdâb . . . . An underground apartment; a cool room (see p. 92).
Sereer . . . . A bedstead made of palm boughs.
Seyyid . . . . A "lord," usually a descendant of the Prophet.
Shatt . . . . A river.
Shiah . . . . A branch of Islam (see p. 254).
Sud . . . . . A raised roadway; an embankment.
Sufragi . . . A table servant.
Sunni . . . . The orthodox division of Islam (see p. 254).
Takht-rawan . A travelling litter, used by the wealthy.
Tel . . . . . A mound.
Teskereh . . . A travelling permit (T.).
Tuckett . . . A bench or wooden couch (query, *takht?*).
Turrada . . . A light boat (see p. 211).

Turria . . . . A short-handled, triangular-bladed hoe (E. *fass* or *faz*).
Ushabti . . . Small figures buried with the dead in ancient Egypt as tomb servants.
Vakil . . . . An agent or deputy.
Wali . . . . Governor of a vilayet.
Wuruq . . . Paper; also papyrus (E.).
Yaourt. . . . A preparation of soured milk.
Zambeel . . . A circular basket.
Zaptieh . . . A semi-military policeman.
Ziboon . . . . A long gown worn by the Arabs (men).
Zikr . . . . A religious ceremony; a kind of dance.

INDEX

ABD EL-KADER, *Effendi*, 135, 154, 155, 187, 193, 194, 195, 208, 210, 213, 216, 217, 231, 242.
Abd el-Zoar, cure of, 193–196.
Abud el, Gumbar, 154, 198.
Abud el-Hamid, 137, 138.
Abu Habba, 127.
Abu Hatab, 223, 224, 338.
Abu Herreire, 321, 323, 324.
Abu Kemal, 296–298.
Affech, 31; Sook el-, 139, 227; marshes, 134, 210, 228; Arabs, 135, 136, 187; tribes, 136, 137.
Ahmet Bey, 139, 140.
Aleppo, 3, 122, 282, 300, 331, 332, 333.
Alexandretta, 331.
Ali (4th Khalifah), 251, 254; tomb of, 259.
Ali Suefi, 52, 74, 76, 77, 78.
Amarah, 11.
Anah, 294–296, 315.
Anazeh Arabs, 316, 320, 321.
Anim Bey, 235, 236.
Arabs, 9, 14; tents of, 23, 24; warfare, 29–34, 39, 40; funeral, 41, 42; weapons, 136, 224, 289; dance, 197; boats, 210, 211.
Arabanahs, 126; journey in, 260–264.
"Arabian Nights, The," Baghdad of, 98, 116.
Armenians, 3, 303.
Ashurbanipal, 163, 164.

BABEL, 28, 46, 130.
Babylon, 28, 130, 131, 145, 339.
Baghdad, 3, first arrival at, 13; flooded, 14; British colony at, 16; departure from, 17, 47; second stay at, 87; illness at, 88; summer in, 90; Europeans at, 90; houses of, 91, 92; insects, 93; servants, 94; British club, 95; amusements, 95–97; native life, 98, 99; walls of, 99; decline of trade, 99, 100; hamals, 102; bazaars, 103–110; coffee-shops, 110, 111; pariahs, 112; religious sects, 113; a mosque, 113; fascination of, 115; hiring a caravan at, 122; road to Hillah, 124 *seq.*, 282, 314.
Baghdadieh, 292.
Bahr Yusuf, 52; fishermen of, 58, 70; journey on, 80–82.
Bahsamun, 67, 70; Roman fort at, 72, 73; 83, 153.
Behneseh, 51, 54, 57; return to, 80, 82.
Bel, the god of Nippur, 144, 146, 159; house of, 157, 162, 163, 165, 169, 170.
Beni Mazar, 51, 52, 59.
Beylan, 333.
Beyrout, 3, 47, 343.
Bint el-Amir, 145, 157, 182.
Birs Nimroud, 46, 132, 286.
Bitumen, used at Nippur, 162, 286; springs at Hit, 286 *seq.*
Blockey, Mr. E., 281.
Blockey, Mr. T., 15.

Blood feuds, Arab, 138.
Broomhead, Mr. M. T., 16, 90, 93, 111, 113.
Bulghour, 303.
Burckhardt, J. L., 316.
Busreh, 7–9; described, 85; 90, 100, 130, 234.

CAIRO, 51, 82, 83, 334, 338.
Caper shrubs, 226.
Caravans, first trip, 17–29; hiring, 120; travel, 123, 124, 273–275; the pilgrim, 277, 278; 283 *seq.*
Chakuri, 198, 199.
Chambers's Journal, article on Baghdad, 108.
Chebar, the river, 144. (See Shatt en-Nil.)
Chokai Effendi, 208, 210.
Clark, Mr. E. W., 178.
Clark, Mr. Geo., 47, 112, 283, 284.
Coffee-making, Arab, 215.
Coffee-shops, at Baghdad, 110, 111.
Commissioner, Turkish, at Niffer, 135, 154, 184, 186, 208.
Constantinople, 3–5, 208.
"Court of Columns," the, 148–152.
Cree, Mr. T. D., 16, 47, 87, 283, 284.
Ctesiphon, 101, 286.
Curzon, Lord, 261, 342.

DAGHARA, canal, 40; village, 43, 141, 235, 236.
Dakruri, tomb of, 54.
Damascus, 3, 47, 282, 312, 313, 343.
Dances, Arab, 111, 198, 203–207.
Daoud, 187, 232, 233, 260, 263, 271, 272.
Deir, 282, 301–304, 312; the Damascus road, 304–313; the Aleppo road, 315–331.
Deir Hafr, 302, 328.
Department of Antiquities, of Egypt, 52, 60, 62, 75, 337; of Turkey, 118, 337.
Deshasheh, 48, 60; work at, 61–66; 152, 153.
Dibse (Tipsah), 325.
Diwaniyeh, 29, 189, 208, 209, 259.
Doomah, 312.
Duncan, Mr. (now Rev.) J., 2, 19, 42, 176, 177, 283, 308.

EGYPT Exploration Fund, 61, 340.
Ennis Pasha, 332.
Erek, 305.
Euphrates, first experiences on, 31–40, 49, 145, 182; scenery below Hillah, 236–240; at Musseiyib, 272; the riverside route to Deir, 283–301; Deir to Meskene, 315–327; 334, 338; abandoned scheme for Baghdad railway, 343.
Excavations, England's neglect of, in Babylonia, 334; *versus* purchasing of antiquities, 336; Arab, 337; Egyptian, 338. (See also Nippur, Deshasheh, Oxyrhynchus, etc.)
Ezekiel, 144; tomb of, 248.

FAO, 6.
Fara, 223, 225.
Farnoosji, 94, 95
Fayoum, the, 52, 61, 71, 83,
Fehami, 293, 294.
Fellahin of Nile and Euphrates, 49, 50.
Feloodjah, 283.
Field, Mr. P. H., 145, 171, 174, 265.
Fisher, Mr. C. S., 84, 88, 89, 139, 143, 154, 160, 196, 208, 210, 216, 217, 230, 257, 266, 279, 314, 321.
Flayah, murder of, 138.

GERMAN excavations at Hillah, 131, 226, 241, 339, 341.
Godi, 75, 78.
"Gold-find Tomb," the, 153 *seq.*
Goupha, 17, 19.
Gouphagi, story of a, 116–119.
Grenfell, Dr., 48, 52, 57, 80.

Guba Mahmoud, 20, 22.
Gudea, of Lagash, 170.

HADITHA, 293, 294.
Hajji Makeef, village of, 234.
Hajji Tarfa, Sheikh, 137, 197, 210, 213, 216–219, 222.
Hamals, of Baghdad, 102.
Hammam, el-, 319, 320.
Hamza, el-, tribes, 136.
Harem, a Mesopotamian, 219–223.
Haroun er-Rashid, 99, 118.
Harper, Dr., 171.
Haswa, Khan, 25, 26, 128, 129.
Hayghan-the-Greater, 32; prisoners at, 33–37, 237.
Hayghan-the-Less, 38–40.
Haynes, Mr. John, 1, 2, 14, 45, 84, 88, 139, 142, 145, 154, 155, 160, 171, 174; directs third Nippur campaign, 175–178; 182, 184, 186, 191, 194, 208, 210, 216, 223, 242, 283, 308.
Haynes, Mrs., 84, 88, 186, 207, 210, 213, 219, 230.
Hillah, 15; first visit to, 29, 46; Baghdad road, 124–131; 132; Jews at, 133; 240, 286, 341.
Hilprecht, Dr., 84, 89, 139, 144; his book *Explorations in Bible Lands during the 19th Century*, 147, 148, 156, 157, 159; 161, 162, 171, 174, 178; his work at Nippur, 179; 182, 185, 186, 223, 224, 226, 230, 231, 235, 241.
Hit, 284; described, 285–292; bitumen springs, 286–288; boat yards, 289.
Hoseh, at Niffer, 197, 198.
Hunt, Dr., 48, 52, 57, 80.
Husan, the muleteer, adventures of, 308–313.
Hussein ("The Martyr"), 163, 206, 207, 254.
Husseineyah Canal, 270.

IBN ERFU, 223, 226, 227.
Imgur Marduk, 157, 159.

JABRIN, 331.
Jann, 116, 209, 290, 292.
Jews, in Baghdad, 100, 112, 113; in Hillah, 133; 272; at Deir, 303.

KADASHMAN-TURGU, 164.
Kaim, el-, 296.
Kalat Japp'r, 321.
Kaleh Saleh, 10, 11.
Karachi, 5.
Kazimaim, mosque of, 100, 163, 280.
Kerbellah, 5, 20, 127, 152, 230, 253, 254; British consular agent at, 264, 266; visit to, 265–270.
Khan, description of a, 128, 129.
Khan Kalessi, see Salahieh.
Kifil, 247–249.
King, Dr., 335.
Koldeway, Dr., 131, 156, 239.
Koot el-Amarah, 13, 140, 141.
Kufa, 242, 249, 250–252.
Kurietain, 311.
Kurna, 9.

LAYARD, SIR A. H., 170, 339.
Locusts, 316.
Loftus, W. K., 248, 259.

MACHARIEH Canal, 242, 245–247.
Mahmoudieh, 25, 127, 128, 274, 275.
Madan, 317.
Maydin, 300.
Meccah, 254.
Medinet el-Fayoum, 83.
Meshed Ali, 163, 249, 254.
Meshed Hussein, 163, 254, 265, 268, 269.
Meskene, 326, 327.
Meyer, Mr. J. H., 176.
Minstrels, Arab, 200–206.
Mohammerah, 6.
Moharrem, 206, 242, 250, 267, 280.
Mohaweel, 28, 129, 130.
Monthly Review, The, article in, on Nippur, 147.

Muleteers, 18, 21, 28; as a class, 120, 121; 328, 329, 330.
Mullah Obeid, of Kerbellah, 265, 266.
Mummy, my first, 56.
Muntefik Arabs, 136.
Musseiyib, 96, 127, 129, 272.
Mustapha, Mr. Haynes' man, 46, 88, 186, 206, 209.
Muthif, description of a, 212–213.

NAHIA, 296, 316.
Naram Sin, 158, 164, 165.
Nasir el-Hussein, 196, 260, 262, 266, 271, 272, 314, 331.
Nasriyeh, 312.
Nebuchadnezzar, 28, 130.
Nejef, 5, 127; burials at, 152; 230; visit to, 252–260.
Nenkheftkha, 66.
Nile, 50, 51, 52, 165, 334, 338.
Nimit Marduk, 158, 160.
Nippur (or Niffer), excavations at, 1, 144–169, 172–183, 335; position of, 3, 144; first sight of, 44; workmen at, 46, 47, 145, 182, 187, 190–192, 229, 231, 242, 265; work resumed at, 85; abandoned, 229; surroundings of, 134 *seq.*; mounds of, 144–147, 152, 156; fall of, 169; Layard at, 170; first American expedition, 171–173; second ditto, 173, 174; third ditto, 175–178; fourth ditto, 178, 179 *seq.*; camp at, 185–189, 228; the Temple of Bel, 146, 157, 159, 160–165; the library, 146, 156, 157; the city gate, 147, 158; pre-Sargonic remains, 147, 156, 157, 158, 164; Parthian Palace, 148–152; Parthian fortress, 153, 154, 160, 165–169; Arabic remains, 148, 152, 153; burials at, 152, 153, 154, 156.
Noorian, D., 171, 174.

OXYRHYNCHUS, 48, 54, 55; cemetery at, 57; 82, 152. (See Behneseh.)

PALMYRA, 282, 305–307, 312.
Parthian remains at Nippur, 146; palace, 148–152; fortress, 153, 154, 160, 163, 165–169.
Pennsylvania University's expedition at Nippur, 1, 84, 89, 169, 171, 173, 177, 182, 335, 339.
Persian *Arabanah* Co., 262.
Persian Gulf, the, 6, 85, 99, 344.
Persian pilgrims, 20, 100, 248, 255, 256.
"Persian Problem, The," 342, 345,
Peters, Dr., 101, 144, 147, 150; directs first Nippur expedition, 171–175; 177, 178, 182, 321, 340.
Petrie, Professor Flinders, 1, 48, 51, 57, 60, 61, 63, 76, 77, 81, 156, 334.
Pilgrims to Kerbellah and Nejef, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 18, 128, 140, 248, 254, 276, 277, 279.
Prince, Mr., 171.

QUIBELL, MR. J. E., 82.

RAILWAY, the proposed Baghdad, 115, 180, 287, 318, 341–344.
Rakka, 319.
Rassam, H., 127.
Rawa, 295.
Rawlinson, Sir Henry, 145, 339.
Rayif Pasha, 332.
Rehaba, 300, 301, 307.
Rich, C. J., 339.
Rigeh, er-, 56, 70, 76.
Roumadieh, 284.
Russian policy towards Persia, etc., 85, 344, 345.

SALAHIEH, 298–300.
Sandafeh, 52, 54; market at, 59.
Sed Ahmed, 53, 54, 59.
Seleucia, 100, 165, 166, 286.
Sephe, 321, 323.
Serdâb, description of, 91, 92.
Seyyid, Sultan Ali, mosque of, at Baghdad, 113.
Shaheen, 137, 138, 140.
Shammar Arabs, 126, 134, 135, 136.

Shammo, as dragoman, 15, 18, 19, 31; 96, 123; at Niffer, 186; 314, 317, 323, 327, 331.
Shaoul Suleiman, of Hillah, 29, 36, 38, 43, 230, 231, 241, 242, 244.
Shatt el-Arab, 6, 86.
Shatt en-Nil, 144, 145, 146, 147, 156, 157.
Sheikh Hassan, 326, 327.
Shiahs, 100, 253, 254, 255.
Shoket Bey, 141, 143.
Siffin (or Sikkim), 321, 323.
Skanderieh, 274.
Sook el-Affech, 139, 227.
Song, an Arab, 201.
Statues, Egyptian, 66.
Sturrock, Dr. P. S., 89, 193.
Subkha, 317.
Suchne, 305, 325.
Suleiman, the outlaw, 140, 141; visits Niffer, 142; accepts a Government post, 143.
Sunnis, 115, 254, 255.
Surah, 319, 320.
Surghul, 156.

"Tablet Hill," 146, 156.
Tadmor, see Palmyra.
Taylor, Mr. W., 59.
Tel el-Heimar, 46.
Tello, 286.
T(e)ref, 316.
Teskereh, obtaining a, 3, 4.
Tigris, steamers on, 7, 8; lower reaches, 10; 49, 87; sharks in, 96; 100.
Times, The, article on Nippur, 147.
Tipsah, 325.
Turrada, the golden, of Ekur, 170, 211.

Ur, 180, 329.
Ur-Gur, 158; door-socket of, 161; 164, 184.
Ur-Ninib, 164.

Wratislaw, Mr. A. C., consul at Busreh, 86, 90.

Zaptiehs, 19, 22, 43; at Niffer, 189, 245; 252, 256, 263, 270, 274, 278, 311, 324, 332.
Zenobia, Queen, 306.
Ziggurat at Nippur, 145, 146, 157, 163, 164; converted to citadel, 166–168.
Zikrs, 114.
Zobeide's tomb at Baghdad, 99, 249, 294.

WITHDRAWN
GLASGOW UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Printed by
MORRISON & GIBB LIMITED
Edinburgh

WITHDRAWN